

FEDUNN

A PLAY in Three Acts

by

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CHARACTERS

TALI (NATALIA): A beautiful, middle-aged woman partially disabled by a stroke; she is a Polish survivor of the War against the Jews. Married to Ray Silverman.

ELI: In his fifties; formerly a scientist, he is striving to reclaim his Jewish heritage. He and his wife, Rosie, are distant relatives of the Silvermans and long-time guests at the Royal Manor.

ROSIE: Eli's wife; a sharp, intense, still-pretty woman in her 40's.

EVE: Pinnie Silverman's wife; an emotional, competent woman, she runs the hotel front desk and office.

DUDI: Young man of the town, where he works with his family as a butcher; short, muscular, wired. Note that his "Yaaah!" is more like a war-cry, a scream, than like the simple affirmative, "Yeah."

SOLLY: Dudi's childhood pal; a stoical, pensive man, trying to find his way in the postwar world. He and Dudi work occasional weekends at the hotel as busboys.

PINNIE: (Pinchas) Co-owner, with his brother Ray, of the Royal Manor; a highly-strung, extremely physical man in his 40's; suffers a hot temper, but retains a private, steady faith in his Jewishness. Married to Eve.

FEDUNN: (*Pronounced Fa- DONE*) A very blonde, handsome, sixteen year old boy of Ukranian descent. He lives in the nearby village.

RAY: A few years older than his brother; good-looking, charming; formerly an actor/comedian; handles the social and public relations aspects of the business while Pinnie runs the kitchen.

SECUNDA: (AL) A Pole; lives and works at the hotel as a waiter and sometime Maitre 'D.

HESH: (Heschel) Eve's younger brother; a jazz musician.

LEON: Youngest of the three Silverman brothers; a Hollywood film producer; visiting for the holidays.

GINA: Tali's niece. Escaped from Europe during the war and spent several years in Morocco. A strikingly beautiful young woman in her late 20's.

MURRAY C.: (Cohen) A war hero; a man of extraordinary physical strength and

prohess; limps from a war wound

THE SCENE: *The Royal Manor Hotel in Upstate New York. The set is divided into three parts: stage left is the dining room, with swinging doors going off to the kitchen upstage and a row of windows along the stage left wall. Stage right is part of the lobby -- about half the size of the dining room -- with a glass-paneled wall intersecting it at an angle so that the lobby entrance to the dining room is visible. On a second tier, above the dining room or lobby, down RIGHT or LEFT -- close to the Audience -- is TALI'S room.*

There may also be a hallway behind the desk in the lobby.

Though scenes in the three-part set may play concurrently, the dialogue is sequential, as written -- hopefully, the power and enjoyment of this play will be much enhanced by the properly-timed juxtaposition of action, language and ideas that occurs simultaneously in the three different settings, i.e. in TALI'S room, dining room, and lobby.

IT IS 1948

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

(Morning light streams through the stage left windows. In TALI'S room, ROSIE and ELI sit with TALI; ELI reads while ROSIE knits. Off, in the kitchen, noise of a large canister of milk being delivered. A pause, then FEDUNN enters the dining room. He is a beautiful, fair boy of sixteen. He furtively opens a drawer or two, then crosses the dining room and exits via the lobby. We can see him there as he stands pensively for a moment. Suddenly he ducks out of sight, as:)

_____ In the dining room, DUDI and SOLLY, wearing butcher's aprons, enter through the swinging doors of the kitchen.

DUDI: Guess who'll be floating around the Royal Manor in his Lincoln Continental, Sol?

SOLLY: I give up. Who?

DUDI: Lord Silverman, the maven of motion pictures.

SOLLY: So what?

DUDI: Pinnie 'll be lookin' for help. The whole Silverman family 's coming up. Ray's wife, the refugee, she had a heartski.

SOLLY: Her name is Natalie. And she 's not old, either.

DUDI: Her name is Tali, Sol. She 's not that old, and a stroke -- it almost killed her.

SOLLY: I know that.

DUDI: And there's some other guests here. We could work the weekend.

SOLLY: I'll work, but I'm not gonna wait on Leon. He 's such a slob, he can't eat around other people.

DUDI: He tips big, Sol.

SOLLY: It's not worth it.

DUDI: Sure, it's the off season. It's quiet. They'll take care of him here hand and foot, like a movie star. He'll enjoy himself.

SOLLY: Dudi, do me a favor.

DUDI: What?

SOLLY: Don't reflect. I didn't go to college, and neither did you.

DUDI: That's because I went to war, Sol. *(As they go back into the kitchen:)*

SOLLY: You never once heard a shot fired in anger, Dude.

DUDI: I served my country, the United States of America...

_____ *In TALI'S room: One side of TALI 'S body is paralyzed; her eyes are sometimes closed, sometimes open; sometimes she takes a deep breath, sometimes makes a sound or gestures.*

ELI: They say that the first sound was a cry, an utterance, the first note, the first breath of Creation.

ROSIE: Where is that said?

ELI: In Kabballah.

ROSIE: How can you talk about that now? At a time like this?

ELI: Why not now?

ROSIE: That's all over with, Eli. No more Kabbalah.

ELI: Now more than ever, Rosie.

ROSIE: No. I don't think so. *(Pause. Enter EVE with tea.)*

EVE: Uh, good morning.

ELI: Excuse me. *(Exits)*

ROSIE: *(Disgusted)* Kabbalah...

EVE: How is Tali?

ROSIE: Sleeping, I think. *(Pause)* What's wrong with you? You're agitated.

EVE: I want a child, Rosie. It's time. We need a child, Pinnie and me.

ROSIE: Poor thing. Why?

EVE: I want to live a normal life, a normal, happy life.

ROSIE: Please. There is no such thing.

EVE: Pinnie, he wants a kid. It would be good for him.

ROSIE: Men can never understand the sorrow of women. It's not in them.

EVE: I think he would be a wonderful father. I'll be right back. *(Exits, ROSIE knits.)*

_____ *In the lobby, PINNIE enters and runs into FEDUNN:*

PINNIE: What are you doing here?

FEDUNN: I delivered the milk.

PINNIE: What are you doing in the lobby?

FEDUNN: I had to go to the bathroom.

PINNIE: There's a bathroom in the kitchen.

FEDUNN: Oh. Okay.

PINNIE: For the help.

FEDUNN: Okay, sure.

PINNIE: Get the fuck out of here. (*Exit FEDUNN. Enter EVE.*)

EVE: Who was that?

PINNIE: The milkman.

EVE: Who?

PINNIE: The milkman. Fedunn.

EVE: What's he doing in the lobby?

PINNIE: Excuse me. (*Starts for dining room*)

EVE: Pinnie!

PINNIE: What?

EVE: Stop running from me, Pinnie. Stop hiding.

PINNIE: I'm not running. I'm not hiding. I'm working.

EVE: I love you, Pinnie. (*Pause*) I'm your wife. (*Pause*) I care for you. I want you to succeed and be happy.

PINNIE: I know you do.

EVE: Then why don't you talk to me?

PINNIE: I am talking to you.

EVE: You don't talk, you yell or you run, like an animal! (*Enter RAY*)

RAY: Good morning.

PINNIE: Morning, Ray.

RAY: (*To EVE.*) You're not talking to me?

EVE: I try. That's all I can say. I try. (*Exits. PINNIE scoffs.*)

RAY: Did she tell you?

PINNIE: What?

RAY: Fedunn.

PINNIE: What, Fedunn?

RAY: The kid Fedunn.

PINNIE: Yeah?

RAY: Rosie ran into him yesterday morning. Upstairs.

PINNIE: Upstairs? What was he doing upstairs?

RAY: I don't know. He may have sneaked into Tali's room. Rosie claims he...uh...made a gesture.

PINNIE: He made a gesture?

RAY: He has a hard-on, he 's impressed with its grandeur, he wants people to see it.

PINNIE: I'll kill him.

RAY: Don't worry about it. The kid 's got problems. He's trying to annoy us.

PINNIE: I'll annoy him into the hospital.

RAY: I'll talk to Dudi, Dudi will talk to Murray C.

PINNIE: No, I'll do it.

RAY: No, let me do it.

PINNIE: I'll kill the sonofabitch!

RAY: No, you stay out of it. I'll take care of it.

PINNIE: Why?

RAY: We handle it quietly. No temper. You remember the Green boy?

PINNIE: Sure, I remember him.

RAY: You broke both his legs.

PINNIE: He was pissing into the water glasses.

RAY: You could be in jail to this day, Pinnie. The kid was a ballplayer. And so is the Fedunn.

PINNIE: What does ballplaying have to do with anything?

RAY: They are popular town kids, Pinnie!

PINNIE: He 's gonna bring milk tomorrow?

RAY: Fedunn? No delivery tomorrow. Don't even think about it. (*Exits. PINNIE sighs, as:*)

_____ *In the dining room, SOLLY and DUDI re-enter:*

SOLLY: I'm sittin' on Guam in a grease pit an' suddenly I get home leave. They give me a hundred fifty bucks and a plane ride --

DUDI: (*Yelling*) Yaaaah! We got a good education, Solly. We got army morals and busboy ethics.

SOLLY: Your father didn't knock your head around, you'd be in the brig today.

DUDI: Yaaaah!

SOLLY: You'd be up in Attica.

DUDI: Yaaaah!

SOLLY: You'd be at the bottom of the Loch Sheldrake lake tied to a pinball machine.

DUDI: Yaaaah!

SOLLY: Why do you do that?

DUDI: What?

SOLLY: Yell like that.

DUDI: Only when I walk into a dining room, I don't think anybody 's there but us, I yell.

SOLLY: Why?

DUDI: For luck, that's why, for juice. *(Enter PINNIE from the lobby.)*

PINNIE: Who wants to work the weekend? *(No answer)* Did nobody hear me?

SOLLY: I don't wanna work.

PINNIE: Why not? You're mad at money?

SOLLY: I love money.

DUDI: I'll work.

SOLLY: I refuse to serve Lord Leon.

PINNIE: We have other customers.

SOLLY: Who?

PINNIE: What's the matter with you? They have to pass a test?

DUDI: I'll work.

PINNIE: Sol?

SOLLY: Yeah, okay.

PINNIE : You seen Murray?

SOLLY: Cohen is in the city with the ponies.

PINNIE: Fuckin' Murray C., he 's not gambling on something he can't live. I'll see ya.
(Starts off)

DUDI: Yaaaah! *(Hands PINNIE a bill)*

PINNIE: Quiet!

DUDI: Excuse me.

PINNIE: You brought everything?

DUDI: Yeah, sure, Pinnie. Flanken, chicken, ground chuck, roast beeves, New York steaks, tongues and livers, intestines, brains and gizzards -- *(PINNIE exits to kitchen)* -- kosher as my mother on the day I was born.

SOLLY: You're an idiot, Dudi. *(Enter ELI from the lobby -- DUDI jumps.)*

DUDI: Yaaah!

SOLLY: A complete idiot.

ELI: Be quiet, will ya? There's a sick woman upstairs!

DUDI: I'm sorry. I thought she was in the hospital.

ELI: She 's not in the hospital. She 's here, upstairs.

DUDI: I'm sorry. How could I know that?

ELI: Where's Pinnie?

SOLLY: He 's in the kitchen. *(ELI goes)* Come on, Dudi. *(They follow ELI to the kitchen)*

DUDI: Don't talk to me like that, Sol.

SOLLY: Like what?

DUDI: Like you're better than me. Okay?

SOLLY: Okay.

DUDI: Because you're not!

SOLLY: Yeah, yeah...*(They exit to kitchen. FEDUNN enters by the front door, then goes upstairs.)*

_____ *In TALI'S room, EVE re-enters:*

EVE: Rosie.

ROSIE: Yes, Darling?

EVE: You never wanted children?

ROSIE: No. Not in this world, Eve. Never. During the war, when Eli had his collapse --

EVE: Eli had a collapse?

ROSIE: You know what happened. We learned about the death camps and he went beserk.

EVE: Eli?

ROSIE: Eli. Even Eli.

EVE: How did he act.?

ROSIE: He was silent. And then he screamed. YAH! YAH! YAH! Like that. The rest of the time, he couldn't stand noise. Not a dish, not a door, a pin, a needle, nothing. YAH! YAH!

EVE: And you?

ROSIE: Me, I had a miscarriage, they had to fix me, I'll never have children.

EVE: Oh, my God.

ROSIE: Don't get sentimental, Darling.

EVE: I'm so sorry.

ROSIE: I'm not. So stop it. And Tali's neice?

EVE: Gina?

ROSIE: Gina.

EVE: What about her?

ROSIE: Is she coming?

EVE: Yes, of course she's coming. They're very close. (*TALI moans*)

_____ In the lobby, HESH appears, carrying an overnight bag and a saxophone case. He stands motionless for a moment, as if deciding which way to go.

EVE: (*Of TALI*) Do you think she can hear us? Do you think she's awake? (*ROSIE shrugs, knits. EVE leaves TALI'S room and comes down to her desk, where she meets HESH.*)

EVE: Hesh, you're here.

HESH: Hello, Eve.

EVE: You know Leon 's coming?

HESH: Yes, you told me.

EVE: Don't start anything with him.

HESH: Of course not. Where am I staying?

EVE: In your room. Where else? Come, I'll walk with you. *(They exit into the hallway. FEDUNN becomes visible in the doorway.)*

ROSIE: Who is it? Who 's there?

FEDUNN: Missus?

ROSIE: GET OUT! GET OUT OF HERE, YOU LITTLE SHIT! *(FEDUNN steps back and closes the door. TALI sits up. ROSIE picks up the phone. It rings on EVE'S desk. EVE re-enters and picks it up.)*

EVE: Yes? What's going on?

ROSIE: Eve! Eve, that kid was here again! Here! Upstairs! That kid! The *shaigitz!* The Gentile!

EVE: Why? What's he doing up there?

ROSIE: Why? How should I know why? Do something! *(Hangs up and goes to TALI, who falls back as she was. ROSIE goes to the door, opens it and looks out. Returns to TALI'S bedside, leaving the door open, as, in the lobby, RAY enters from the hall.)*

RAY: What's wrong?

EVE: That boy was here again, just now, by Tali's room, upstairs, the boy from the village, Fedunn.

RAY: Alright. I'll take care of it. Don't tell Pinnie. *(RAY starts for his office in the hall. EVE stops him)*

EVE: By the way, Ray, Hesh is here, he'll work lunch.

RAY: Fine. I'll take care of it. *(RAY exits. EVE goes back to her desk, as:)*

_____ *In the dining room, PINNIE enters with ELI.*

ELI: So what do we do, Pinchas?

PINNIE: We go on living, Eli.

ELI: While we are waiting for Tali to die?

PINNIE: No. Right now we get ready for lunch.

ELI: Lunch.

PINNIE: Yes. We set the tables. *(They start to work)*

ELI: What's the hardest thing, Pinchas?

PINNIE: In life?

ELI: No, in the hereafter. What?

PINNIE: I don't know.

ELI: Take an opinion.

PINNIE: Marriage.

ELI: No.

PINNIE: Fasting.

ELI: No.

PINNIE: Okay, what?

ELI: Lamentation. That's why they keep that old wall around, in Jerusalem.

PINNIE: Good. Why don't you go there?

ELI: I don't know yet.

PINNIE: You don't know yet, or you don't know when?

ELI: I don't know why. Sit down, Pinchas. The Passover. God sent the plagues on Pharaoh. Blood, boils, locusts, frogs, hailstones and fire, the killing of the firstborn -- ten plagues.

PINNIE: I know that.

ELI: And God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Why?

PINNIE: I don't know why. You tell me.

ELI: Each time. Moses says, "Let my people go, or else." Pharoah doesn't get it. God hardens his heart. Why?

PINNIE: We can't hang around in the dining room. *(Enter AL SECUNDA)* About time, Al. *(Growls, exits to kitchen. Enter RAY from the lobby)*

RAY: Good morning, Al. Eli.

SECUNDA: Ray. *(Starts setting a table)* What's the count?

RAY: For lunch?

SECUNDA: No, the weekend.

RAY: For lunch, it's the same.

SECUNDA: No, the weekend. *(Re-enter PINNIE)*

RAY: What's the count?

PINNIE: For lunch, it's the same.

RAY: The weekend, Pinnie.

PINNIE: Only Eve knows.

SECUNDA: I need to know.

PINNIE: You'll have two stations.

SECUNDA: Myself?

PINNIE: No. One for Leon and the family, one for the guests. You'll have Solly and Dudi, they'll work everybody.

SECUNDA: What's the count?

PINNIE: I don't know the exact count! This will give you a nervous breakdown? Fuck the count! *(Exits to kitchen)*

RAY: I'll find out, Al. *(Exits to lobby. SECUNDA works quietly)*

ELI: Do you mourn?

SECUNDA: Are you talking to me?

ELI: Do you mourn, Secunda?

SECUNDA: That's a personal question, Eli.

ELI: I'm just asking.

SECUNDA: Don't ask me, Eli, I'm setting up now.

ELI: You're a sad sack, Secunda. That's why I'm asking: Do you mourn? *(No answer)*
You drink vodka, and then you mourn? Is that it? *(Re-enter RAY)*

RAY: Uh, it's changed, Al -- you'll have twenty-four for lunch. I'm sorry.

SECUNDA: Never mind.

ELI: I'm sorry.

SECUNDA: Never mind. Thank you, Ray. *(Exits to kitchen)*

RAY: *(To ELI)* What's going on with you?

ELI: I have questions.

RAY: What did you say to him?

ELI: Nothing.

RAY: You're driving people nuts.

ELI: I'm sorry.

RAY: Are you dizzy from not eating, or what?

ELI: Do I look wobbly to you? Do I look faint?

RAY: You look deranged. Eat something.

ELI: Let's talk about the plagues, Ray.

RAY: What plagues?

ELI: In the bible. God sent the plagues onto Egypt -- *(Re-enter SECUNDA, with lunch stuff.)*

RAY: Not now, Eli.

ELI: Where are you going, Ray? *(Exit RAY for TALI'S room. A Pause.)* I apologize, Al.. *(AL ignores him and works. ELI continues, half to himself, half to AL)* You know that old Ukranian, Petashnik? You know him, the big anti-semite. What is he, he's eighty, ninety, he's walking down the road with his cane. The fact that Jews have settled around him in America feeds his hatred and gives him life. I am hiding in the bushes. I want to give him a fright, it will send him to his ancestors. Here he comes, his head is straight, his gait is steady, his eyes are clear. "Here is a reptile," I say to myself, "his mind is clear. He sees the road, he sees trees, he sees cars, that's it. This old man, Petashnik, he has achieved clarity, the clarity of reptiles. He has the gaze of a lizard, of a pigeon..." *(Exit SECUNDA. ELI stops and follows him off and PINNIE re-enters through the other swinging door, as:)*

_____ *In TALI'S room, RAY enters.*

RAY: What happened?

ROSIE: Did Eve tell you?

RAY: What?

ROSIE: About the boy!

RAY: She told me.

ROSIE: Did you do something?

RAY: What should I do?

ROSIE: Beat him. Arrest him.

RAY: I'll talk to him.

ROSIE: Don't talk, Ray. Do something.

RAY: I'll talk to him.

ROSIE: Then find out!

RAY: What?

ROSIE: What he wants from us!

RAY: Tali was kind to the boy. He wanted to see her, see how she was, that's all.

ROSIE: I don't believe it, Ray.

RAY: How is she?

ROSIE: Why is he sneaking around here?

RAY: He's gone now. How is Tali?

ROSIE: What can I say?

RAY: Did she wake up?

ROSIE: I don't know.

RAY: You don't know?

ROSIE: She sat up, but that doesn't mean she woke up.

RAY: She sat up?

ROSIE: Yes, when the boy came in. *(Pause)* She shouldn't be here, she should be in a hospital.

RAY: I made a promise, and it's a promise I'm going to keep.

ROSIE: But she doesn't know the difference.

RAY: She knows.

ROSIE: Alright, Ray.

RAY: Take a break, Rosie. I'll sit with her. *(ROSIE wraps her knitting, stands.)*

ROSIE: Why doesn't he ask? Why does he have to sneak around?

RAY: Thank you.

ROSIE: Alright, I'll go. *(To TALI) Natalia? (No answer. ROSIE exits. RAY sighs. In the lobby, EVE leaves her desk, looking for PINNIE.)*

_____ *In the dining room, EVE finds PINNIE.*

EVE: Pinnie!

PINNIE: What, now?

EVE: Don't growl at me.

PINNIE: What?

EVE: You talked to Ray?

PINNIE: What about?

EVE: The town kid, the boy from the town, Fedunn.

PINNIE: What about him?

EVE: Never mind. *(He heads for the kitchen.)* Wait! Where are you running?

PINNIE: *(Stopping)* The kitchen, Eve, the kitchen.

EVE: Pinnie, my brother Hesh wants to work the weekend.

PINNIE: We don't have a station for him.

EVE: Secunda can put a suit on, he'll be the Maitre'D. Hesh can take his station.

PINNIE: Does Secunda know about this?

EVE: He won't mind. He needs a rest. Leon will take care of him.

PINNIE: You know in advance what Leon is going to do?

EVE: I'll explain it to him.

PINNIE: Alright. I'll talk to Al.

EVE: Good. *(PINNIE starts again for the kitchen)* Hesh will be an old man in ten years, Pinnie.

PINNIE: Is that a riddle? Is that a puzzle?

EVE: You think it makes him feel good to wait on tables? At his age?

PINNIE: No, I don't.

EVE: Calm down. You're hysterical.

PINNIE: This is not living. This is slavery and oppression. *(Enters dining room, stares at ELI. ELI stares back. AL SECUNDA enters from the kitchen with a tray of condiments.)* I gotta talk to ya, Al.

SECUNDA: Okay.

PINNIE: My brother-in-law is going to work the weekend.

SECUNDA: That's good.

PINNIE: You'll put on a suit tonight. *(Dim out as the guys continue to work; special on GINA as she enters the lobby with her suitcase.)*

SCENE TWO

(Later, after lunch in the dining room: SECUNDA clearing up, RAY, ELI and PINNIE at one of the tables. In TALI'S room, GINA enters quietly and sits with TALI.)

RAY: *(To ELI)* What is it with the seven plagues?

ELI: Ten.

PINNIE: Please. Don't get him started.

ELI: Forget about it.

RAY: Have some food, Eli.

ELI: I'm sick to my stomach.

PINNIE: We all have problems, Eli.

ELI: I don't ever want to hear my own voice again.

PINNIE: Good.

SECUNDA: Coffee?

PINNIE: No.

RAY: Yeah, I'll have a half a cup, Al.

ELI: Ten. *(EVE appears with HESH in the lobby.)*

EVE: Talk with Leon.

HESH: I'll think it over.

EVE: Go -- have something to eat. (*EVE goes to her desk, HESH crosses into the dining room.*)

RAY: Hello Heshel!

HESH: Hiya, Ray. Pinnie. Eli. How 's Tali, Ray?

RAY: The same.

PINNIE: Sit down, have something.

RAY: You hungry?

SECUNDA: You want lunch?

HESH: Just a bite, Al.

SECUNDA: What?

HESH: What's left?

SECUNDA: Chicken, stuffed cabbage.

HESH: Which chicken?

SECUNDA: Boiled.

RAY: Excellent.

HESH: I'll have that, Al. Thanks.

SECUNDA: With what?

HESH: Whatever. Potatoes. Don't worry about it, I'll get it myself.

PINNIE: Sit. (*SECUNDA goes*)

HESH: Thanks, Al!

PINNIE: So.

RAY: So. I'm amazed at the randomness of everything.

ELI: I agree with that. You could have been an assimilated German, you could have been born in a Polish *shtetl*, you --

RAY: I met a girl in Miami, in '34. I could be there now, doing a supper club routine.

ELI: -- You could be dead. Ponder that.

RAY: Your life could go a hundred different ways. Or it could only go one. That's what I ponder.

HESH: My second wife. She 's a redhead. Once she was a chorus girl in a show. I saw her standing in front of the Garden wrapped in a mink. What if I didn't stop? What if I kept on going to Broadway? (*As AL brings him food*) Wha'dya call that? Thank you, Al. That's Fate. What happens. (*Eating*) You look somebody in the eye once too often, boom, trouble. You don't know. You never know. Basically, you're lookin' at an ass go by. Talk to 'em first, then see what happens. Right?

ELI: Right, Hesh.

HESH: Actually, I'd maybe like one more jump into the tiger's lair, once more before it's over.

ELI: Eat, fuck and die.

SECUNDA: You're still a young man, Hesh. You can do whatever you want.

PINNIE: What's the matter with you, Al? The man's a hophead.

SECUNDA: Excuse me.

HESH: Nobody can do what they want. That's only in the movies. Right, Ray?

RAY: Hey, don't insinuate -- I am no longer a swordsman. I put that away years ago, even before Tali. I didn't wanna go on sleeping with the customers. I played, I acted. It wasn't easy. I reformed. A couple drinks at the bar, but I didn't get drunk. I made dates, I didn't show up. Tali, you know, she was a refugee... She 's not an American -- we had problems with language, with culture, with illness....And now?...Tali... I never met a deeper soul. But I don't know her. To this day I don't know her...

_____ *In TALI'S room, GINA enters, TALI opens her eyes.*

GINA: Natalia? Tali? It's me, Gina. I'm here, Darling...(No response)

_____ *In the dining room.*

HESH: What bothers me is I don't wanna act like a shmuck. You don't have enough love and affection, your dick starts making bad decisions. *(Silence as they stare at him.)*
Where's Leon?

PINNIE: He 's on his way.

HESH: Eve wants me to ask him for a job.

PINNIE: What kind of a job?

HESH: Good question.

PINNIE: *(Loud)* What's the matter? You don't want to ask him?

HESH: Why are you yelling?

PINNIE : Excuse me! You don't want to talk to Leon?

ELI: *(To PINNIE)* Why do you do that?

PINNIE: WHAT?

ELI: Act tough? Don't do that anymore. I'll speak for myself. Don't act tough with me. I'm not one of your busboys. I'm not one of your dishwashers. It's all a front, anyway, it's a mask, it's a lie. You are not tough. You are a good-hearted man. *(He stands, starts out.)* But you're moody! *(Exits to hall via lobby)*

PINNIE: THANK YOU. *(Pause)*

HESH: It's okay. I don't mind talking to Leon. I envy Leon. He doesn't give a damn. Thirty years ago he figured it out: Money talks, shit walks. He doesn't drive himself crazy about what other people think of him. He doesn't give himself a hard time. *(PINNIE stands and abruptly exits to the kitchen.)*

RAY: There he goes again. He 's got too much energy. He can't sit still.

HESH: Pinnie 's mad at me.

RAY: Why?

HESH: I wake up, I'm thirty-eight years old, I'm broke, and I have to wait on tables in his hotel.

RAY: What took you so long to figure it out?

HESH: I'm a musician, Ray --

RAY: That's right, you're an artiste.

HESH: What's happening with Tali?

RAY: Have you been upstairs?

HESH: No.

RAY: It's allright. She 's unconscious. But sometimes.... Her eyes are open. She sees something. She tries. I can feel something going on there. She sits up. You never know with Tali. Something...*(Noise off, signifying LEON'S arrival)* Ah, that's Leon. He 's here.

HESH: Shit.

RAY: *(Standing)* Stay. Finish eating. *(Exits through lobby. Enter AL SECUNDA. He and HESH exchange looks. Dim out on the dining room; lights stay in TALI'S room.)*

SCENE THREE

(Later. MURRAY D., HESH, RAY, PINNIE and LEON at a table in the dining room. AL SECUNDA is waiting on LEON while the others drink coffee and watch. In TALI'S room, GINA is still with TALI.)

GINA: Here, Natalia...Water...Take...Drink...*(She holds the glass to TALI'S lips but TALI doesn't respond. Lights come up in the dining room.)*

PINNIE : In the old country they had different ways. They made arrangements.

LEON: Sure, it's a business arrangement.

HESH: I could never handle it. The emotional wear and tear, it's too much.

SECUNDA: You get the little starlets, eh, Leon?

PINNIE: *(To LEON)* Stop eating for a minute, will ya?

LEON: You bet, Al -- a horny young thing, what could be more fun?

RAY: Then what?

LEON: Whad'ya mean then what?

RAY: You still have to have to have something to say afterward.

LEON: I do. "Goodbye and good luck." Or, "I'll see ya at the audition." Otherwise, too many feelings get hurt. I went through high school, and that was enough. Thank you, Al.

RAY: And the next morning you wake up feeling stupid.

HESH: I just wanted my music.

LEON: You're a fucking junkie fer chrissakes. Junkies don't love nobody.

HESH: I wanna practise, she wants to talk about problems. (*PINNIE laughs*) I'm at a club, she's calling every twenty minutes. The same thing happened twice.

LEON: I thought you married three times.

HESH: I don't count one of 'em.

RAY: Which one?

HESH: The second two.

RAY: Why not?

PINNIE: That's two you don't count, not one.

LEON: I'm a bachelor, okay? I like it that way. Up front. I have girlfriends, and that's that. Visitors. No entanglements. No hurt feelings. I have a maid, I have a cook, and that's all I need.

PINNIE: Naturally you have a cook.

LEON: I want to have a party, I hire people.

HESH: I'm sad about the whole thing, to tell you the truth..

LEON: Stop being sad for crissakes, it's a pain in the ass.

PINNIE: (*To HESH*) Naturally no one will stay with you, because you cannot pay the rent.

HESH: Thank you, Pinchas.

PINNIE: You're welcome. (*AL serves LEON.*)

LEON: Thank you, Al.

RAY: You see old age coming and you start to think: "I should live a full life, know many women, have adventures," and then you think, "Is it worth the trouble?"

LEON: Are you talking about me, Ray, or are you talking about yourself?

RAY: Remember the old days, when the bar was downstairs? Certain nights it was crowded with single women. We had a customer, the famous comedian, whom I will not name, he liked the older ones. They – the older women, widows, divorcees -- they would hang around in the bar until the end, trying to pick up a stray, and he would take his choice. He explained to me once why he preferred them older, more mature: "They know what they want," he said, meaning they wanted to get laid, pure and simple. But he was wrong.

PINNIE: I remember him. He 's a prick and a half, that one. A woman doesn't want sex. She wants a relationship. She wants a family. Naturally.

RAY: He makes a fortune joke-writing for the radio.

PINNIE: He 's still a prick.

LEON: You didn't get it, Pinnie.

PINNIE: I didn't get what?

LEON: The point, Pinnie, which is that the women were older, okay?

RAY: Me, I don't want to store up remorse for myself.

LEON: "Store up remorse"? I can't eat around this.

PINNIE: Then stop already. We have dinner in an hour.

RAY: Like I said, life is short. (*RAY stands and goes through kitchen door as AL re-enters and makes a face at PINNIE.*)

LEON: Where's he going?

PINNIE: You know Ray, he can't stay in a room for three successive minutes without suffering.

LEON: Look who 's talking. How's he handling things?

PINNIE: The man is devastated.

HESH: He's such a gentelman, Ray, he keeps it to himself.

LEON: Yeah. Well, I never knew Tali.

PINNIE: How could you know her?, you're never here.

LEON: I'm in touch, Pinnie, as you know. I'm in touch.

PINNIE: You through eating your "snack" yet? Al has other things to do today.

LEON: Al, you're a prince. I'll take care of ya, Al.

SECUNDA: (*Bussing the table*) No problem, Leon. (*HESH stands*)

LEON: Where are you going?

HESH: (*Looking at his watch.*) I should help in the kitchen. (*Exits into kitchen, AL following. Pause.*)

PINNIE: How come you never married, Leon?

LEON: How many times do I have to fuckin' tell you?

PINNIE: You never fuckin' told me once yet.

LEON: I like my privacy, okay? I don't wanna fuckin' share my bathroom with another person. I don't wanna hear kitchen noises. I don't wanna hear about their problems. Okay? And I don't wanna keep my eyes and hands off other broads. Finally, I don't want nobody spending my fuckin' hard-earned money.

PINNIE: That's your problem, Leon.

LEON: What is?

PINNIE: You're scared somebody will know all your bullshit.

LEON: That's not my problem, that's your problem.

PINNIE: What about kids?

LEON: What about 'em?

PINNIE: You never wanted 'em?

LEON: They're a pain in the ass. We open a picture, we invite teenagers, they fill out a card, we learn who they wanna sleep with -- okay? -- that's all I need to know. (*Enter ELI from lobby*)

ELI: HELLO, LEON. (*LEON nods*) You've eaten?

PINNIE: He 's eaten.

ELI: Good. (*PINNIE exits to kitchen*) Now I have a question for you.

LEON: Go.

ELI: How can you be an American and a Jew at the same time?

LEON: Okay, I'll tell you -- you split yourself into two parts. Okay? The outside does business and the inside stays safe. I know guys, New York Jews, talented people, they come out to the Coast, they get confused, they marry these fucking *shiksa* ice princesses -- okay? -- the guy is fucking five feet two an' she's a six footer, a model, an actress, she takes three hours to put on make-up, okay?, she doesn't know how to talk to children, they subsist on fucking martinis. (*Eats*)

ELI: Thank you.

LEON: (*Finishing*) Now, I have a question for you, Eli.

ELI: I got to go say hello to Gina. (*Starts off*)

LEON: One question!

ELI: (*Staying*) I can't wait to hear it.

LEON: First let's get out of here before Pinnie loses his temper. (*Stands. As they walk to lobby:*) This is the question, Eli: Who invented "America"?

ELI: Thomas Jefferson.

LEON: Wrong.

ELI: I give up. Who?

LEON: We did, okay? -- The Jews. Eastern European Jews from little Yiddish towns, they fell in love with the idea of America and they invented it.

ELI: How?

LEON: Through motion pictures, okay?

ELI: That is an amazing idea, Leon. Absolutely amazing. (*Starts to leave*)

LEON: Fact. There's your American Dream. Before that, there was no such thing.
(Picks up phone as ELI goes upstairs) Hello, Eve? Can you get me long distance? (Dim out on the dining room. Lights up in TALI'S room as ELI enters. SECUNDA is alone in the dining room, clearing up after LEON.).

SCENE FOUR

ELI: (Entering) May I?

GINA: Of course. (Pause)

ELI: She's still asleep?

GINA: Yes. (Pause)

ELI: Don't talk to me if you don't feel like it.

GINA: I don't feel like it.

ELI: Excuse me. (Starts out)

GINA: No. Sit if you want. (ELI sits. Pause.) I was thinking of Avenging Angels. I think there are Avenging Angels. You go too far into the dark and the Angels of Light will make you pay.

ELI: And if you go too far into the light?

GINA: The same. That's where your Lord God comes in. He sends the Angels of Darkness, who smite you, and who take it all away.

ELI: Is that why Pharaoh...?

GINA: Pharaoh?

ELI: Excuse me, never mind. (Awkward silence) You still live in New York?

GINA: Yes.

ELI: What do you do?

GINA: I sell clothes.

ELI: Ah. Good.

GINA: Macy's.

ELI: Good. *(Pause)* You've been here now, what, three years?

GINA: No. Not that long.

ELI: And you're speaking English very well now.

GINA: I knew English...before.

ELI: Before the war?

GINA: Oh, yes. I studied in school.

ELI: Ah.

GINA: Tell me -- you're a physicist, yes?

ELI: Yes and no.

GINA: What happens in the world of atoms?

ELI: Do you mean electricity?

GINA: No, I'm talking about the demonstration at Hiroshima. *(Pause)* You can't answer that. *(She smiles at TALI)*

ELI: Can she hear us?

GINA: Yes, perhaps. *(Pause)* Yes, I think so. *(Pause)*

ELI: Do you know the story of Exodus?

GINA: Exodus? *(Pause)* Science, Eli: Science.

ELI: Yes?

GINA: What does it say we are here for?

ELI: From the point of view of Science, it is to make more Science.

GINA: And life?

ELI: According to science, it just happened. A chain of certain events, and boom.

GINA: An accident.

ELI: Not exactly an accident. A chemical event.

GINA: No reason.

ELI: Not exactly no reason. Of course, I don't understand. So now I study, I search.

GINA: Where? Scientifically?

ELI: In the wisdom of my ancestors.

GINA: People think you are slightly mad.

ELI: And they? What are they?

GINA: Fools.

ELI: And your opinion?

GINA: I don't think you're mad.

ELI: Thank you. Neither do I.

GINA: I'll ask you a question.

ELI: Please.

GINA: Every twenty-seven days, I bleed. Why?

ELI: You are a part of life on earth, part of a process, a reproductive process.

GINA: I have no choice in this.

ELI: No.

GINA: It is the moon. It makes the tides, it makes the bleeding.

ELI: True.

GINA: And the atmosphere?

ELI: There is no life without it.

GINA: We are breathed. We are bled. You see? You see? This is why I suffer such a terrible claustrophobia. I cannot bear confinement.

ELI: That's understandable.

GINA: No, you don't understand. Even now, I must breathe, or my chest is in my mouth. I must breathe... A man is a thing. He is crushed by other things. On this he deceives himself: He thinks he has a soul. A Jew is a thing who thinks, "I have a soul and God has chosen me." Now I will give my opinion on The Exodus. This God, he is very specific about his needs: How he should be treated, what he should be fed, who should feed him, what they should wear, what kind of service, and so on. Then he leads them with a pillar of fire. This Lord of yours, he is a spaceman --

ELI: I don't see it that way.

GINA: I'm sorry.

ELI: It's alright. *(Pause)* You should go down for supper.

GINA: Yes. *(Stands)* You're not eating?

ELI: No, I'm not hungry. I'll stay here. *(GINA leaves. In the dining room, DUDI enters.)*

DUDI: Yaaah!

SECUNDA: Shut up!

DUDI: I'm sorry. Am I early?

SECUNDA: No, you're on time for a change. Where's Sol? *(Enter SOLLY)* Let's get to work. *(HESH enters. Dim out as the guys start to set up for lunch. In the dark, we hear SOLLY saying:)*

SCENE FIVE

SOLLY: If a woman approaches you here at the hotel, do you...uh...respond? *(Dim up in the dining room)*

HESH: If I like her, yes. When I was younger, I fucked people whether I liked them or not. *(Enter AL.)*

SECUNDA: All set up?

HESH: Can we put out the appetizer?

SECUNDA: They have a choice of appetizer.

HESH: They have a choice?

SECUNDA: They have a choice.

HESH: There's not that many people --

SECUNDA: They have a choice. Look at the menu.

HESH: There's a menu?

SOLLY: We're ready in the kitchen. We're loaded for both appetizers.

SECUNDA: Good. You're set up for Leon?

SOLLY: Is Leon eating dinner?

SECUNDA: Why?

SOLLY: He just had a five-course snack and he'll have dinner, too?

DUDI: *(Entering)* Yaaah!

SOLLY: Quiet, you jerk!

DUDI: Sorry.

HESH: I'm gonna have a smoke.

SECUNDA: Not here, in the kitchen. *(HESH goes)*

DUDI: He 's gonna geeze himself.

SECUNDA: No, he ain't. *(LEON becomes visible in the lobby, where he picks up the house phone.)*

DUDI: Smoke what?

SECUNDA: Leave him alone.

DUDI: What do I care? I should care what Hesh will smoke? I don't give a fuck. *(SECUNDA exits into lobby.)*

_____ *In the lobby:*

LEON: *(To AL.)* I'm on the phone.

SECUNDA: I can see that. (*Exits to hallway office*)

LEON: (*Into phone.*) It's me, Eve. Can you get me that line again, please?

_____ *In the dining room, intercut with LEON'S phone call:*

SOLLY: Did ya see Murray C. today?

DUDI: Yeah.

SOLLY: Did ya talk to him?

DUDI: Whad'ya mean talk to him?

SOLLY: Talk, like in talk. Language.

DUDI: Sure, I talked to him. Why shouldn't I talk to him?

SOLLY: And?

DUDI: He was in a bad mood.

SOLLY: He buttoned somebody prob'ly. Somebody 's after him.

DUDI: His mother 's after him. (*SOLLY laughs*) Gorillas. They slap each other around.

SOLLY: Gorillas? You seen yourself lately?

DUDI: Everyday, Pal. I look in the mirror, I see myself.

SOLLY: You seen your legs and arms?

DUDI: Gaw 'head.

SOLLY: Like a Gorilla. You got the legs and arms of a gorilla.

DUDI: Gaw 'head, Solly.

SOLLY: Your legs are bowed.

DUDI: Gaw'head.

SOLLY: Severely. They are severely bowed.

DUDI: Yeah, but you should see what's there between 'em, Sol.

SOLLY: I seen it already. I'm not interested.

DUDI: Nine good inches.

SOLLY: You wish.

_____ *In the lobby:*

LEON: (*Into phone, intercut with above*) Hiya, Tony. No, I'm talking realism, Tony. Okay? You think everybody is intelligent? You think people are going around with questions? With intellect? No. They are going around with desires, okay, they are going around with dreams. What? They're glad they're not sick, they're glad they've survived. Okay? They want a break. They want a few laughs. Don't begrudge them this, Tony. What do they want to see? They want to see love affairs between Gods and Goddesses, okay. They want to keep on eating. They want relief from labor and aggravation, Tony. (*AL reappears with tie and cumberbund. LEON covers the mouthpiece.*) A writer. (*Al keeps on going, re-entering the dining room from the lobby just as SOLLY does from the kitchen.*)

LEON: (*Into phone*) Just do the love story, Tony, which is what we are paying you for. That's it, Tony. Now you're talkin'. I love it. Call me if you have problems. (*Hangs up, lights a cigarette, re-enters the dining room.*)

_____ *In the dining room:*

DUDI: Murray, I think Murray 's talkin' marriage. He goes with Marcia, they go everywhere.

SOLLY: Murray C. He made a lot of money overseas. Marcia would like that. Fuckhead was an M.P. over there. Quartermaster corps. You know how much money those guys made sellin' shit? Chocolate bars and bullets? Forget about it. (*Enter LEON*)

LEON: You guys still here?

SOLLY: You're early, Leon. We got five minutes yet.

LEON: I'm lookin' for Pinnie. Where's Pinnie?

SOLLY: He 's in the kitchen.

DUDI: He 's on the stove.

LEON: He works too hard. (*Sitting*) How can you live here? There's no life here.

DUDI: I like it here. It's quiet. Then in the Summer we got action.

SOLLY: What action? You'll get married and cut meat.

DUDI: You went to school here, didn't ya Leon?

LEON: Sure, I'll never forget it. We had classes, two different kinds of fucking people, okay? One group was Morris and Leon and Alan and Irving and David, okay?, and their parents had accents. Then you got names like Tommy, Johnny, Bobby, Donnie, Richie and Jimmy.

DUDI: Yaaaah! It's the same!

LEON: And Glen and Gary and George, and Billy and Daryl and Earl!

DUDI: Yaaaah! Earl!

LEON: Anyway, I'm here to save you guys. (*Enter GINA*) Hello!

SOLLY: Good evening.

DUDI: Good evening.

GINA: I guess I'm too early.

LEON: Not at all. I'm Leon.

GINA: Hi, Leon. Gina. I'm glad to meet you.

LEON: Same here. Where are you sitting?

GINA: No, I'll come back in a few minutes.

LEON: It's okay. These guys don't mind --

GINA: No, I'll come back. (*Exits into the lobby*)

DUDI: Yaaah!

SOLLY: (*Stricken*) Shut up, Dudi! (*Re-enter HESH. Everyone takes their stations. HESH heaves a big sigh.*)

HESH: Here we go. (*Dim out while work continues, lights stay on in TALI'S room*)

SCENE SIX

(After dinner. In the dining room, GINA, ELI, LEON, ROSIE, and EVE are at the family table while SECUNDA, HESH, SOLLY and DUDI float in and out at their tasks.)

GINA: Everyone has a horror-show to tell. My mother is a also good case. Once she was a great Polish beauty. An assimilated, blonde. Her beauty was her ticket through life. And in 1938 it got her a ticket to America.

ROSIE: She was lucky to get out of Poland.

GINA: My mother, she lost three husbands in three different wars. The first one was the best. The second was my father. The third one brought me up as far as the War Against the Jews.

EVE: What was he like?

GINA: The last one?

EVE: Yes.

GINA: Well, he was no gentleman, I can tell you that. Like Tali's first husband, he ran for his life when the attack against us began.

EVE: Where is your mother now, Gina?

GINA: She 's in New York. *(Pause)* When I was in Morrocco, there was a cafe. The Cafe Central. It's where the old Arab men would go to drink coffee and smoke. I used to go there every day. And sit with them, and smoke, and drink coffee.

DUDI: Excuse me. *(Starts busing the table.)*

GINA: It was very unusual, of course, for a woman to sit with the men. And a foriegner. Of course, I was in a constant state of paranoid trance at the time. I was smoking hashish, day and night. But I felt safe there, with the old men. They left me alone. No one spoke to me. Still, I felt protected by them...They watched over me. *(HESH approaches, followed by PINNIE.)*

HESH: Anybody want anything?

EVE: Sit down, Heshel.

HESH: I'm not finished clearing up yet.

EVE: Five minutes.

PINNIE: They have to set up for breakfast --

HESH: It's all right, anyone want something?

LEON: Well, I don't know...

ELI: Go, Hesh. (*HESH goes, PINNIE waits impatiently.*) Join us for a minute, Pinnie.

PINNIE: I can't now. (*Exits in disgust.*)

SOLLY: Sit as long as you want.

DUDI: No problem!

EVE: Thank you, boys! (*LEON stands*)

ROSIE: (*To LEON*) Oh, you're leaving?

LEON: I'm tired.

ROSIE: A moment with you, Leon.

LEON: Okay, I'll be in the lobby. Finish your coffee. Everybody else stay. Don't follow me.

ELI: Who was following you?

LEON: Well, good night! (*Exits to lobby*) See you in the morning!

ELI: He 's stuffed. (*HESH re-enters*) Like a turkey.

EVE: Thanks, Heshel. We'll only be a second.

HESH: Don't worry about it.

ROSIE: (*To GINA*) Those old men in the cafe, they had been civilized by their faith. But go to the East and this same religion wants to throw the Jews into the sea. (*Stands*)

GINA: Yes, I know.

ROSIE: We won't let them.

GINA: Good.

ROSIE: Excuse me. (*Exits to join LEON*)

GINA: Why didn't the Americans and the British bomb the death camps? Why didn't they let us in?

ELI: We had enemies here. We had hatred. It was not so easy to have an influence. *(Tears come to his eyes)* I'm sorry. There's no excuse. *(Covers his face)*

GINA: Please, Eli. I shouldn't have brought it up. *(ELI slowly recovers)*

_____ *In the lobby:*

ROSIE: Leon.

LEON: Rosie.

ROSIE: I want you to do something about this boy from the village.

LEON: What boy?

ROSIE: He 's a Gentile kid named Fedunn.

LEON: Fedunn, eh? Let's go outside. You'll tell me about it, and we'll breathe some of that good Catskills air. Okay? *(They go)*

_____ *In the dining room.*

EVE: Let's call it a day. A day and a night...*(She starts out , followed by the others, but ELI remains seated; HESH starts busing the table)* Thank you, gentlemen!

SOLLY: No problem, Eve.

DUDI: Good night!

EVE: Good night!

DUDI: All right!

HESH: *(To ELI)* You're staying here? *(SOLLY comes over to help HESH finish the table.)*

SOLLY: You ready, Dudi?

DUDI: I'm ready.

HESH: Thanks, Sol.

DUDI: All right! *(SOLLY and DUDI exit.)*

ELI: Gina. Wonderful.

HESH: Gina?

ELI: She knows something.

HESH: What? *(ELI doesn't answer)* You wanna sit in the dark, sit. I'm putting the lights out and I'm going to bed. *(Exits into kitchen with a load. The lights dim out in the dining room. Special on kitchen door as SECUNDA enters – ELI watches as AL takes a huge belt from a bottle of vodka. Music.)*

SCENE SEVEN

(Early morning, before dawn. FEDUNN enters from the kitchen, crosses into the hallway. RAY and GINA enter the lobby. FEDUNN runs upstairs.)

GINA: That was wonderful, Ray! Thank you!

RAY: Please! I enjoyed myself!

GINA: *(As they cross to the dining room.)* I love to row a boat! And at sunrise! So early in the morning, so fresh...!

RAY: Ah, no one's here yet.

GINA: Oh, that's fine.

RAY: The coffee 's not made.

GINA: That's fine!

RAY: How about a cup of hot tea?

GINA: Oh, yes!

RAY: I'll get it. *(Starts off, stops.)* Some juice? A roll and butter?

GINA: No, no, just tea please! Thank you! *(RAY exits. GINA hums to herself, then her demeanor becomes solemn. HESH enters from the lobby, and is surprised to see GINA.)*

HESH: Oh! Good morning!

GINA: Good morning. How are you?

HESH: Well, it's a long story...

GINA: Oh, yes, I'm sure it is. *(RAY exuberantly re-enters with a cup of tea, slows when he sees HESH, who quickly moves away from GINA.)*

HESH: Morning, Ray.

RAY: Hello, Heshel!

HESHEL: Excuse me. *(HESH hurries off into the kitchen as RAY joins GINA.)*

RAY: Here we are.

GINA: Thank you, Ray. Ah, it's so nice here in the morning.

RAY: The first time I woke up here, I thought I was in Paradise. This whole place, it was just a little farm -- a goat, a cow, some chickens and turkeys, a few geese. My father didn't do much with it. There was an outhouse where the pool is now, a dirt road, it was quiet. I woke up and I could hear them, the animals, the birds, the insects. The air was so sweet I wanted to run and fly. I'll never forget that morning as long as I live.

GINA: Ray.

RAY: Yes?

GINA: I don't want you to start thinking about me. You are a very nice man. A handsome man. We have fun. But I don't want you to start thinking about me.

RAY: Gina...

GINA: You're relieved, aren't you? Yes, of course you are. *.(The door opens to TALI'S room. FEDUNN enters. GINA stands)* Thank you for this morning.

RAY: Will I see you later?

GINA: Yes, of course..

RAY: I'll get to work then.

GINA: Yes. Goodbye. *(RAY exits back into the kitchen).*

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

FEDUNN: Missus? *(TALI opens her eyes)*

TALI: Oh! It is you! *(She tries to sit up straight)* You've come.

FEDUNN: Here, I'll help you.

TALI: Thank you, boy.

FEDUNN: Missus.

TALI: Sit, please. *(FEDUNN sits in a chair by the bed)* What are you doing? Are you stealing?

FEDUNN: I brought the milk.

TALI: Oh. Good boy. And the bread? Did you bring bread?

FEDUNN: I don't do that, Missus.

TALI: No?

FEDUNN: Mortman's bakery brings the bread.

TALI: Mortman? *(Sound of a door opening and closing)* That's Pinnie. He is going to the synagogue. He walks. You'd better be careful. *(FEDUNN stands as PINNIE appears in the lobby.)* Wait. Don't go! *(PINNIE enters the dining room, crosses to the kitchen and exits.)* Be careful! *(FEDUNN slips quietly out the door.)* They'll kill you! The Kapos, Benjamin! Benjamin! Watch out! *(Pause; then we hear ROSIE yelling, OFF.)*

ROSIE: STOP! THIEF! OH! YOU LITTLE SONOFABITCH! YOU LITTLE BASTARD! OH! TALI! *(TALI switches off the lamp; enter ROSIE, followed by GINA.)*
Tali!

TALI: *(In Yiddish)* What's the matter?

ROSIE: Tali! *(ROSIE rushes to embrace her.)*

TALI: Get away from me! You don't understand! The boy is in danger!

ROSIE: The boy?

TALI: The sneak-thief! *(Gina takes TALI in her arms)*

GINA: Come, darling. Come, Natalia. It's all right now. *(Blackout.)*

End Act One

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

(Later, at breakfast.. ROSIE, ELI and EVE are seated, and SECUNDA is prepared to serve Below the stairs, RAY is helping TALI into a wheelchair.)

ROSIE: I couldn't believe my eyes. That nasty little *shaigitz*.

EVE: Dr. Zimmerman says it was the shock. The boy was in her room, she spoke.

ROSIE: We'll fix him. You'll see.

EVE: Where were you, Eli?

ELI: I was up early. I saw Pinnie walking to *Shul* this morning. I thought, "How happy he looks, how he enjoys this walk of his, away from Eve, away from the hotel, enjoying the Fall air -- a man walking to join the worship of his forefathers." That's Pinnie.

ROSIE: That's Pinnie?

EVE: That's one Pinnie.

ROSIE: That's an imaginary Pinnie.

EVE: Here she comes! *(They applaud as RAY wheels TALI to the family table; SECUNDA beams.)*

SECUNDA: What is the boy's name?

ROSIE: It is Fedunn. George Fedunn.

RAY: *(As he and TALI are seated)* I'll take care of it.

ROSIE: Really?

RAY: Yes.

ROSIE: How?

RAY: Don't worry about it.

TALI: The boy is hungry and frightened.

EVE: Where's the bread, Al? (*Al goes. To RAY*) Every day he forgets more. (*RAY ignores her*)

TALI: He has to hide. He has to sneak around. It's because of the bread, and the cheating.

EVE: The bread?

TALI: The bread and the vodka. There are hidden places. It must be terrible for him, because he 's so tense. (*As AL returns with bread, etc., in Polish.*) Am I right, Secunda?

SECUNDA: (*In Polish.*) That's right, Natalia.

ROSIE: Are we talking about Fedunn?

TALI: (*Firmly*) I'm talking about the sneak-thief. What is it like, to follow yourself around, afraid to be seen? Is he seen? Who sees him, Eli?

ELI: Perhaps God, Tali. Perhaps God sees him.

ROSIE: I saw him.

TALI: People don't understand. They jabber like monkeys. (*Pause*) It was difficult to breathe. We carried the corpses, and they dangled. They dangled. (*Weeps momentarily*) Children.

ROSIE: Where was God, Eli?

ELI: I don't know.

ROSIE: I know. And so do you. He was not there.

ELI: (*Gently*) You want something from God? You have demands on God?

ROSIE: Yeah. I want him to pay for his crimes.

ELI: God had nothing to do with it.

ROSIE: All the more so, Eli. Let him show remorse for his indifference.

ELI: Have you heard of Job?

ROSIE: Don't throw Job at me. This God of yours tries to talk to Rosie, I will smash his face in.

TALI: Then what does one obey?

ROSIE: I'm not sure of what you mean, Tali.

RAY: *(To TALI.)* What do you mean, Darling?

TALI: I mean, What does one obey?

RAY: What do you mean?

TALI: One always obeys oneself.

RAY: But we weren't talking about that.

TALI: It is oneself whom one obeys. Always. That's why I don't like people very much.

SECUNDA: *(To ELI)* Are you eating?

ELI: No.

SECUNDA: Some juice?

ELI: Yes, apple juice will be fine, Al. Thank you. *(AL goes)*

TALI: They give you a moment. There is a long moment there. Then, who decides? Who says "yes"? Who says "no"? One long moment. Who says "yes"? Who says "no"? And then you are moved. What moves you? How is one moved? *(A silence)*

ROSIE: They separated husband from wife, mother from daughter, father from son, lover from lover...They had a sadistic genius for it. It's the way you deal with cattle, with sheep, with animals --

ELI: Excuse me.

ROSIE: It was unforgiveable, and will never be redeemed.

ELI: No.

TALI: Something sees.

ROSIE: What?

TALI: Something from another world. *(ELI stands)* Oh, I'm sorry.

ELI: Not you, my dear. (*Kisses her*) Not you.

RAY: Sit down and eat something, Eli.

ELI: No. Excuse me. I can't eat now. (*Exits*)

ROSIE: Why does he do that?

EVE: Let him go.

ROSIE: And why doesn't he eat?

TALI: He goes into the woods, he comes back, he stinks like an animal.

RAY: Who, Darling? (*SECUNDA returns and begins to serve the meal.*)

TALI: Where does he go? He has a cave? He has sheep in a cave?

RAY: (*Smiling*) Yes, he must have sheep.

TALI: (*To RAY*) You don't understand. I don't speak of Eli.

RAY: Who do you speak of?

TALI: I speak of the Master.

ROSIE: (*In tears*) What does she mean?

EVE: The holy days are coming up, Rosie.

ROSIE: (*To EVE*) So what? Why is he doing these things? What does he mean by this behaviour?

EVE: Ray --

RAY: I'll talk to him. (*Enter PINNIE from the kitchen.*)

PINNIE: What's going on?

EVE: Nothing, Pinnie.

PINNIE: The regular guests are coming in now from the lake.

EVE: Let them come.

ROSIE: He 's driving me crazy. I can't stand it anymore.

EVE: Stop now, Rosie. Let's have peace.

TALI: I'm sorry.

PINNIE: Go by the door, Ray. I'm on the stove. *(RAY goes to greet the hotel.guests.)*
Ready, Al?

SECUNDA: I'm ready.

PINNIE: Let's go. *(Goes back to kitchen)*

ROSIE: Is he starving himself? They didn't kill all of us, the fucking bastards. And when I say bastards, I mean all of them, not only the Germans. They didn't kill us off. They didn't succeed. Should we starve ourselves to death now for the Gentiles? Should we give one inch? *(Music. Dim out as the guys clean up.)*

SCENE TWO

(Later, after breakfast in the dining room. EVE, TALI, LEON, RAY)

EVE: Still, we can't have it. We can't have strangers walking in and out of the rooms.

RAY: He 's only a kid. The Petashniks let him work around the dairy, he delivers a few cans of milk...

EVE: And it's not the first time.

LEON: Are we speaking of the Fedunn kid?

RAY: You know about it?

LEON: Oh, yeah, Rosie mentioned him. But I don't know the kid.

EVE: George Fedunn. He lives in the village.

RAY: Don't worry about it.

EVE: Why do you keep saying that?

RAY: Remember, there's no father there. And no mother, either.

TALI: No mother?

EVE: There is a mother. *(To TALI.)* He means, not really.

TALI: Not really?

RAY: She 's a hitter. So Tali took an interest in the boy.

LEON: When was this?

EVE: Her mother was a hitter, so she 's a hitter. That's how it works.

LEON: *(To RAY)* You're not answering me?

RAY: *(To LEON)* It was about a year ago.

EVE: It's hysteria. The mother had an episode, they took her to the hospital in Middletown. They did something to her. Now she is no longer a hitter. Now she wanders around in the village. She talks to herself. She prowls in people's yards. She 's got lipstick all over her mouth and something on her face, so she looks strange, grotesque...

LEON: Who is this?

RAY: We just told you, Leon – Fedunn's mother.

TALI: Oh! *(In Yiddish)* The sins of the fathers!

LEON: What did she say?

RAY: She said, "The sins of the fathers."

LEON: But what did she mean by that? *(HESH enters from the kitchen)*

HESH: Can I get something for anyone?

EVE: We're fine, Heschel.

RAY: Leon?

LEON: Uh, I'm full. Thank you.

EVE: Thank you, Darling. *(HESH goes back into the kitchen.)*

TALI: The hair falls out. The teeth fall out. The bones crack. The muscles get weak. The nerve-ends die. The mind is tired. The memory starts to go. The eyes go. The heart

fails. The blood turns brown. The piss is red. The bowels are loose. The words slur. The thoughts won't come out. The sensations leave. And they try to break your back in the meantime.

RAY: (*Gently*) Who, Darling? Who does? Tali?

TALI: They. The people, the things, the monsters behind the paper, behind the wall, behind the wire. They try to break your back. They want to crush you. With boredom, with fatigue, with hunger, with pressure, with the paper, with the orders, with the corpses, with the greed....(*RAY stands.*)

RAY: She 's tired...

EVE: Yes, certainly she's tired.

TALI: I want to go out. Take me outside, please.

RAY: Yes, Tali. (*RAY starts wheeling her out. Music. Dim out as the guys work, special light on MURRAY C's entrance in the lobby.*)

SCENE THREE

(*Between breakfast and lunch. Same day. SOLLY, DUDI, HESH on a break, smoking and drinking coffee. RAY sits with them.*)

HESH: We had three people walk in here five after eleven.

RAY: Talk to Secunda.

HESH: The dining room is supposed to be closed at eleven.

RAY: Don't talk to me, talk to Secunda.

HESH: Why Secunda?

RAY: Secunda is in charge of the Dining Room.

HESH: Secunda doesn't say three words to anybody.

DUDI: Speaking of late, there was no Lord Leon.

SOLLY: That's the advantage of Leon: he misses breakfast. You don't even have to set up for him.

RAY: He'll come in later. That's the disadvantage of Leon.

DUDI: I won't be here. I gotta go to town.

RAY: He can take care of himself. (*Enter MURRAY C.*)

DUDI: Murray the Cohen!

MURRAY C: What are you guys doin'? You on vacation?

DUDI: We're talkin' love and marriage here.

MURRAY C.: I never seen a happy marrage in my life. Married people are not happy.

HESH: What are you doing, Murray?

MURRAY C.: I have to be doing something? I'm dropping in. (*Helps himself to rolls and coffee.*)

DUDI: You're hungry?

MURRAY C.: I came to pay my respects to the Lord Leon. Where is he?

RAY: He 's not up yet. (*HESH stands and leaves*)

MURRAY C.: I see I'm making a lot of friends today. (*Of HESH*) What's with him?

RAY: He 's not happy this morning.

MURRAY C.: I never seen a happy hophead.

DUDI: People, they're never happy where they are. They have to be in Florida now to be happy.

MURRAY C.: That makes no fuckin' sense at all.

RAY: You see some of these old couples in the hotels, they've been married forty years, they haven't said anything new in thirty-nine years, the wife says eat this, eat that, she whines and complains, the old guy stares into his soup. Lunch is over, he's had a mouthful of soup and a slice of rye bread, he asks the busboy to bring him prunes for his digestion. He 's afraid to get up and go on with his life. The busboy is making a racket to get him out of there, so the old man utters a Hebrew curse and lurches out of the dining room. His wife is right behind him. She has hair coming out of three moles.

DUDI: Yaaah!

RAY: She follows as Morris goes around to the back of the house and starts banging his head against a tree. "Morris! Morris! What are you doing you crazy bastard! Are you out of your mind!" Morris, he screams a curse at the tree, at the sky, at God, and then he walks down to the pool to look at the young girls. The wife follows in his shadow, she's still jabbering at him. He sits at the kiddie end of the pool with his feet in the water, puts a towel over his head and prays for death.

SOLLY: He's still got his shoes and socks on.

DUDI: Yaaah!

MURRAY C.: Ray, you're a regular comedian.

SOLLY: The old geezer was a pants presser all his life, now all he wants is a moment's peace.

DUDI: And he ain't gonna get it! Sadie won't let him have it! Yaaaah!

SOLLY: Calm down, Dudi.

MURRAY C.: Did you hear about Meyer the Cop? They found out he's got a wife from Australia, and another one, from ...where? A Filipino! Guy comes back from the war with two wives!

DUDI: Yaaah!

RAY: How could they make this guy a cop?

MURRAY C.: Are you kidding? Anybody could be a cop here. They like boys, playing. We got a play fire department and play cops. You coulda been a star, Ray.

RAY: I don't think so.

MURRAY C.: Why not?

RAY: Because I didn't.

MURRAY C: Fuckin' Leon, I remember when he was hustling souvenirs. It's a fucking miracle he's hustling movies now instead.

RAY: Good. It was a life that was made for him. It's perfect for him and he's done well for himself. *(ELI appears in lobby door)*

ELI: Ray?

RAY: Yeah?

ELI: Tali.

RAY: Yes. Excuse me. *(Starts out. LEON enters from kitchen.)*

LEON: Ray, I got to talk to you.

RAY: Not now. *(Exits through lobby.)*

MURRAY C.: Lord Leon!

LEON: What?

MURRAY C.: How 's your back?

LEON: I can't walk.

MURRAY C.: I saw you walking.

LEON: I'm walking, but I can't.

MURRAY C.: Why don't you lie down?

LEON: When can I lie down?

MURRAY C.: When you finish eating. *(Chuckles)*

LEON: Not funny, Murray. You know how many pills I gotta take just to stay even, stay alive? I go to the drugstore three times a week. I'm keeping the sonofabitch in business.

MURRAY C.: Where's this?

LEON: This is in Beverly Hills, Murray.

MURRAY C.: You have to watch your food.

LEON: I do. I look at it before I eat it. How 's the gambling?

MURRAY C.: Fuck it, Leon. My own fuckin' relatives won't get off me. They're tied to Laskowitz who is tied to everybody else.

LEON: Everything is a gamble, Murray.

MURRAY C.: I know that, Leon. *(PINNIE enters via the kitchen.)*

LEON: Pinnie!

PINNIE: What's up, Leon?

LEON: Sit down, I wanna talk to you.

PINNIE: I don't have time.

LEON: Sit down and say hello for a minute! (*PINNIE sits*) Hours go by, then it's years, check-ups and examinations, then boom, okay? You're dead. They're sitting *shiva* over you.

PINNIE: This is what you want to talk to me about?

LEON: Everything goes to my back. I think certain thoughts, my back hurts.

PINNIE: With me it's the stomach. That's life.

LEON: You guys make fun of my eating.

PINNIE: I don't wanna talk about eating.

LEON: You snort.

PINNIE: I snort?

LEON: Yeah. (*To MURRAY C.*) We're sitting at the table, and Pinnie snorts. Everybody looks at their hands all of a sudden

PINNIE: Once in a while, I snort.

LEON: You snort, you growl, you grumble and you yell. Who criticizes you for this?

PINNIE: My wife. You wanna talk in front of Murray?

LEON: Why not? Murray is a friend of ours.

MURRAY C.: You want me to leave, I'll leave.

PINNIE: Leave. (*MURRAY goes into the kitchen.*)

LEON: We have a lot to talk about.

PINNIE: So?

LEON: So we should converse.

PINNIE: No, we should *dahven*.

LEON: Why?

PINNIE: It 's the time of year, Leon. We start to atone. This is not the kind of thing you can do by eating. (*Starts for the kitchen*)

LEON: Come back here!

PINNIE: What?

LEON: Sit down and listen and don't go anywhere!

PINNIE: No.

LEON: Sit, please! One minute!

PINNIE: One minute. (*Sits*)

LEON: At this point in time I own the hotel. I'm the majority owner.

PINNIE: Congratulations.

LEON: I think we have to sell.

PINNIE: No.

LEON: Why not?

PINNIE: What the fuck is the matter with you?

LEON: Nothing is the matter with me. What's the matter with you?

PINNIE: It's our livelihood, Leon.

LEON: This is not a livelihood.

PINNIE: Why not? What's wrong with you?

LEON: We're losing money.

PINNIE: Temporarily. It's a bad year.

LEON: It's my money.

PINNIE: We're having problems with the weather.

LEON: The weather? What's wrong with the weather? (*PINNIE stands*) Wait!

PINNIE: Quickly, Leon.

LEON: What have we got here in this hotel?

PINNIE: I give up. What?

LEON: I'll tell ya what you got here, okay?

PINNIE: What?

LEON: This is a singles joint.

PINNIE: Only in the off season, on certain holidays.

LEON: People are coming here to find something to sleep with. Neurotic women and crippled men.

PINNIE: So what?

LEON: So make up your mind. What kind of hotel is this?

PINNIE: During the season, we offer health and recreation in the country air. We have a day camp for the children. We have sports. We have social activities with the great social director, Ray Silverman. We have arts and crafts. We have dancing. Each year we have a fund-raiser for Palestine. Families come here. Kids grow up here.

LEON: During the week, the men are in the city, the women have affairs.

PINNIE: So what?

LEON: Come on, this was true when the old man ran the place as a kosher resort, okay? (*Scoffs*)

PINNIE: It's none of your business, Leon.

LEON: It is my business! You're naive. (*PINNIE starts to leave*) Stay! I have something else to say to you!

PINNIE: Fuck you. (*Exits into kitchen. LEON sighs. Re-enter MURRAY C.*)

LEON: Sit down, Murray. You want to do something for us?

MURRAY C.: No.

LEON: Come on. Wiseguy.

MURRAY C.: Okay. It depends.

LEON: On what?

MURRAY C.: What it is.

LEON: I have an interest in this resort.

MURRAY C.: I know you do.

LEON: I have an interest in its future. (*MURRAY waits*) There's a kid coming around here by the name of Fedunn... (*PINNIE comes in and shouts:*)

PINNIE: Murray!

MURRAY C.: What?

PINNIE: Burn the place down!

MURRAY C.: Okay! (*PINNIE goes back into the kitchen. To LEON*) Is he serious? (*Enter DUDI from kitchen*)

DUDI: Yaaaah!

LEON: (*To MURRAY C.*) I am.

MURRAY C.: What kid?

LEON: He's a Gentile kid in town. He is coming around here to harass us.

MURRAY C.: Fedunn?

LEON: Yeah. George Fedunn. Teach him a lesson.

MURRAY C.: I'll take care of it. (*Music. Dim down as GINA goes into TALI'S room and the boys are setting up for the heart's game.*)

SCENE FOUR

(*Later. HESH, MURRAY C., RAY, LEON are playing hearts in the dining room. SOLLY is at another table reading a newspaper. In TALI'S room, TALI and GINA are having tea.*)

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: In the 14th century we got an invitation to come to Poland. From King Casimir. *(Laughs)* They said, Welcome the Jews. Bring the Jews. But the priests never forgave us for something. No? I can't remember now. What was that?

GINA: There was a man, Natalia. A Jew, of all things, he misunderstood. He blamed the Jews.

TALI: Who was he? Who was that man? *(GINA bursts into tears)* Oh, Gina. I'm sorry. God forgive him. *(GINA stands)* Don't go! Please! *(GINA sits)*

_____ *In the dining room:*

HESH: I had no idea what was going on.

LEON: That's because your head was in dope-a-dope land.

HESH: I'm talking about the level of competition, Leon, the millions hustling, the effort it takes to make it here.

LEON: What do you think, it's only tough in America?

HESH: No. But does it have to be so harsh?

LEON: Yes, it does. Play a club, Ray.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: The men wore black gaberdines and the ear-locks. And they had big black beards.

GINA: I remember.

TALI: And they kept coming, like sheep. There was no room for them all.

GINA: Oh! *(Sobbing)*

TALI: But we were good at making shirts and pants! *(Laughs)*

GINA: And then I was selected! I was selected!

_____ *In the dining room:*

LEON: What are you pondering? I got three stoppers in my own hand, for cryin' out loud! *(RAY plays a card.)*

MURRAY C.: You can't get anything to eat in America.

LEON: We have it good here. There's money here, there's opportunity here. Even failures can stay alive here. (*HESH winces*)

MURRAY C.: There's New York and California. In between it's all Rednecks.

LEON: I ponder that.

RAY: Don't ponder now. Play a spade. (*LEON takes the trick*) Shit.

LEON: Is it such a good idea, nourishing the cripples and the defectives, okay?, putting up with the bad elements?

HESH: What bad elements?

LEON: What are you trying to do, make me sound stupid?

HESH: No, I'm asking a question.

RAY: You do sound stupid.

MURRAY C.: The hopheads and the winos.

LEON: Right.

HESH: The gamblers and the thieves.

LEON: Life is a gamble. Life is theft....

RAY: Are you lost in philosophic thought, Leon?

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: Tell me about the boy, please. (*GINA collects herself*)

GINA: There is no father.

TALI: No father. Where is the father? (*In Yiddish*) I know. The father is in another country, enjoying himself with women.

GINA: Perhaps.

TALI: Of course. The boy is hungry. The boy is lonely. And so he steals. This gives him meaning, and excitement. This brings him attention.

GINA: Attention?

TALI: Yes, something is seeing him.. something sees...this brings him danger. He could be killed. And so he steals and he hoards. It is a kind of game for him. You see?

GINA: Yes, Tali.

_____ *In the dining room:*

RAY: *(As LEON leads)* Oh, shit.

MURRAY C.: The Coons and the Portoricans.

HESH: Who do you like, Murray?

MURRAY C.: Jews and Indians. After that, I'm uncomfortable. And I'm not so sure about the Jews.

RAY: *(Of the hand)* God, I'm gonna eat 'em all but two.

MURRAY C.: Thank God I was in a special service, I didn't have to hang out with the fucking peckerwoods.

LEON: We're talking psychopaths here.

HESH: Hell, Murray qualifies.

MURRAY C.: You wanna punch in the mouth, Hesh?

HESH: No, thank you. Only you should hear yourself.

MURRAY C.: I heard myself, I'm not deaf.

SOLLY: We got our own country now, anyway.

LEON: *(To SOLLY)* You can't jump into a conversation.

SOLLY: Excuse me.

RAY: America is line up and go for it.

LEON: That's you, Ray! You think you have to shoot the moon every time. Whose deal?

MURRAY C.: I hate the fucking Chinese, too.

LEON: *(To SOLLY)* You wanna go fight Arabs? *(RAY deals)*

SOLLY: Forget I spoke.

LEON: Go fight Arabs. Myself, I contribute.

MURRAY C.: Imagine a country, everybody 's a Jew: the Army, the garbage collectors, the waiters, the criminals, everybody.

RAY: I love it. We should preserve it. We should make the most fierce army ever seen on Earth. Your lead, Leon.

MURRAY C.: I'm with Ray.

LEON: Economic problems start happening in Palestine, they'll come here. They'll come to America. And I'll tell you why.

SOLLY: Why?

LEON: Because eating comes first, that's why.

HESH: Do you mean gluttony, or do you mean greed?

LEON: Call it whatever you want.

RAY: You 're talking bullshit, Leon. Play a diamond.

LEON: There's trouble coming in the industry, mark my words. We don't want the Reds in the business. The country doesn't want them, and we don't want them.

HESH: Nobody is following my thought.

RAY: What thought?

HESH: Things just happen to you.

LEON: Like being a dope fiend.

HESH: Come on, Leon.

LEON: You had no choice?

HESH: Yes and no.

LEON: You had to geeze the shit into your fucking arms? You had no choice?

RAY: Shut up, Leon.

LEON: What are you contemplating, Murray? Play a card!

HESH: People are helpless. They can't do anything about anything.

MURRAY C.: I hate that attitude! That's why we had people walking into the fucking gas chambers! Fuck that!

HESH: Excuse me. *(Rises)* I gotta lay down.

LEON: Where you goin'?

HESH: My feet hurt.

RAY: Go ahead, Hesh. Go take a nap. *(Exit HESH)*

LEON: What happened, we hurt his feelings? We're in the middle of a hand...I had a great hand!

RAY: He 's sensitive, Leon.

LEON: He 's a fuckin' terrorist, Ray. He 's never gonna make it. He 's gonna be a waiter for the rest of his life. Now he wants acceptance and revenge both, he 's so fucking uncomfortable with himself.

MURRAY C.: He hangs around too much with Negroes.

_____ *In TALI'S room, as GINA collects the tea things:*

TALI: The boy can't help himself.

GINA: No. He wants attention.

TALI: Ah. Good. I'll rest now, before dinner.

GINA: Good. *(Kisses her, turns off the light)*

TALI: Thank you, Darling.

GINA: Of course.

TALI: We must do it again! We must have tea another time!

GINA: Yes, Natalia.

TALI: Soon!

GINA: *(Sitting)* Yes. Very soon...*(TALI closes her eyes)*

_____ *In the dining room:*

RAY: We'll play three-handed.

LEON: Three-handed is no good.

RAY: Solly, you wanna play hearts?

SOLLY: Yeah, okay.

MURRAY C.: What time is it? *(Looking at his watch.)* I gotta go anyway.

LEON: What about the score?

MURRAY C.: Keep a tab. I'll see ya, guys.

LEON: See ya, Murray.

RAY: So long. *(MURRAY C. exits)* We'll play three handed.

LEON: Three-handed is no good.

SOLLY: Murray used to point his finger at me and I'd go into hysterics. He was goin' around squeezing that black handball all the time. He had powerful hands.

RAY: *(To LEON)* Pop had the strongest hands of anyone I ever knew. Stronger than Murray. He terrified me with those hands of his.

LEON: His wrists were made of iron and his heart was of steel. He could bend a horseshoe. He could pull a firetruck like --

RAY and LEON: The Mighty Atom!

SOLLY: *(Laughing)* I don't understand it, but Murray C. would point his finger at me until I couldn't stop laughing. *(Wanders into the kitchen)*

RAY: Murray C. They flew him into France, behind the lines. He could climb cliffs and march a hundred miles without food or water. He fought a personal war against the Germans. He enjoyed himself, but he paid for it with a piece of his leg.

LEON: Deal the cards. We'll play a round of gin.

RAY: One hand. (*Deals*)

_____ *In TALI'S room, TALI starts awake:*

TALI: What crime? Oh! (*She gags, catches her breath, recovers as GINA holds her*)
Benny! Don't go past the wire! Stay inside the gates, Benny! Where do you go? Where
do you hide? You go with the *Goyim*? Where? Stay here, boy! Stay!

_____ *In the dining room:*

LEON: How 's Tali doing, Ray? (*Pause*)

RAY: Well, you heard her. She 's speaking. It's a miracle. (*They arrange their hands*)
Even before, it depended on her mood, on the time of day, on the weather. There were
different people there, in different worlds. (*As they play...*) There's a story, Leon, that
would make your hair stand up.

LEON: Who is this Gina?

RAY: Tali's niece.

LEON: I know that. But who is she?

RAY: Why?

LEON: No reason. (*Pause*) She 's beautiful. (*Knocking*) Three points.

RAY: (*Annoyed*) We're playing one hand, Leon.

LEON: I know that.

RAY: So why knock? Why not go for gin?

LEON: Come on, we'll play a round.

RAY: I can't. I gotta go.

LEON: Wait -- how many points? (*RAY exits upstairs quickly. LEON sits alone, starting
to feel forlorn and forsaken. Re-enter SOLLY.*)

LEON: Hey, Sol!

SOLLY: Yeah.

LEON: What are you doin'?

SOLLY: I should take a nap.

LEON: Come on, we'll play gin.

SOLLY: Yeah, okay.

LEON: Penny a point, nickel a game, quarter a box.

SOLLY: Say again?

LEON: I'll deal....(*Dim down as RAY enters TALI'S room*)

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

RAY: I'll sit with her now.

GINA: Thank you, Ray. (*GINA stands*.) She's quiet now.

RAY: And how are you, Gina? (*GINA doesn't answer. Dim out as she starts downstairs*)

SCENE FIVE

(In TALI'S room, RAY is with TALI. GINA enters the lobby. In the dining room, SOLLY and LEON are playing gin. SOLLY deals.)

SOLLY: Forty-one.

LEON: (*Tallying*) Okay, that's game. You're on a double-shnide.

SOLLY: How much? (*GINA, in the lobby, lights a cigarette*)

LEON: It's not bad. It's about thirty-two dollars. We got another game yet -- you win big, you could make it up.

SOLLY: Let's go.

LEON: (*Seeing GINA*) No, I should change.

SOLLY: Yeah, I gotta do my fuckin' silverware anyway.

LEON: You're a gentleman and a scholar, Sol. (*Exits*)

SOLLY: There goes the weekend.. (*SOLLY goes into the kitchen*)

_____ *In the lobby, LEON approaches GINA:*

LEON: How are you?

GINA: I don't know how to answer that question. What do people expect from such a question?

LEON: All over the world people ask that question. "How are you?" It's a universal question.

GINA: And the answer?

LEON: " Fine. How are you."

GINA: I'm fine. How are you?

LEON: I feel great. (*Pause*) Where are you from?

GINA: Morocco.

LEON: And before?

GINA: Poland. Like Tali. First I screwed a platoon of Germans. There was a Colonel. He liked it a lot. He took me with him to France. Then I ran from him to Algeria. From there I was lost in Morocco.

LEON: I'm sorry.

GINA: Why?

LEON: You had a rough time. (*She shrugs*) Where was your mother?

GINA: My mother married a Pole. A smuggler, a criminal. He got her out. This was before the German invasion, before the war. I stayed with my aunt. Tali. In Lodz. Okay? (*Starts off*)

LEON: Wait a minute.

GINA: You don't understand anything. You're a putz.

LEON: Excuse me? (*Pause*)

GINA: How are you?

LEON: I feel paralyzed.

GINA: Have a cigarette.

LEON: No thank you.

GINA: You have no idea how you are. You try to find out what I'M doing here. What are YOU doing here?

LEON: I have business here. I belong here.

GINA: You're right. I am a stranger.

LEON: I gotta take a shower.

GINA: Are you lonely?

LEON: Excuse me. *(Exits. GINA laughs, puts out her cigarette, leaves.)*

_____ *In TALIS room:*

TALI: What have you done with the boy?

RAY: Nothing, Tali. It'll pass. People will forget.

TALI: Yes. They'll forget all about it.

RAY: But the kid should stay away from here.

TALI: He thinks they don't see what's going on. He thinks he 's invisible.

RAY: I don't know about Rosie, or Pinnie. What they'll do to him.

TALI: Ach! The kapos! They're coming! They'll kill the child!

RAY: No, Tali. Not here. No Kapos here. They won't do that here.

TALI: He thinks: "I'll sneak by." He thinks: *(In Yiddish.)* "All in time. Time will swallow it all." He thinks: "This will end soon." But he was caught.

RAY: He's been caught before.

TALI: They caught him.

RAY: I'd better go down now, Tali.

TALI: Go.

RAY: You'll be all right?

TALI: No doctors, Darling, and no hospitals.

RAY: No doctors, no hospitals,, Tali.

TALI: Swear it.

RAY: I swore already.

TALI: Swear again.

RAY: I swear it. *(RAY stands abruptly, but exits quietly.)*

_____ *In the dining room.*

(Enter EVE. She looks calm and refreshed. SOLLY and HESH enter from the kitchen.)

EVE: Hello, boys! We got some check-ins. Who wants 'em?

HESH: How many?

EVE: Five. Two couples and a kid.

HESH: I hate waiting on kids.

EVE: What kind of attitude is that, Heshel?

SOLLY: I don't wanna bus the whole dining room.

EVE: Why should you?

SOLLY: Because Dudi won't work.

EVE: Why not?

SOLLY: Because he's sick.

EVE: Wait. Pinnie 'll be here in a minute. I'll get Ray. *(Exits through lobby. Enter PINNIE from kitchen - -he, too, seems more relaxed.)*

PINNIE: Whatsamatter?

SOLLY: You heard already?

PINNIE: You guys make a lot of noise.

SOLLY: Dudi can't work.

PINNIE: Why can't he work?

SOLLY: Because he's sick. The fucking idiot. Where's Al?

PINNIE: I don't know. Ray can do the seating and hover. *(Enter ELI from lobby)* Eli.

ELI: Yes, Sir?

PINNIE: You wanna work?

ELI: Work at what?

PINNIE: Take Dudi's place. Just for Dinner.

ELI: What's the matter with Dudi? *(EVE appears behind him in the lobby door. She 's almost shy.)*

PINNIE: He's sick. Fuckin' idiot.

ELI: Okay. Sure. Certainly.

HESH: Elijah the busboy.

ELI: What do I do?

PINNIE: YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO?

ELI: Why are you yelling?

EVE.: First get dressed. Put on a pair of black pants and a white shirt. Find a tie.

SOLLY: You'll need bread, water, cream, butter for four tables --

PINNIE: Hurry up!

SOLLY: Then I'll tell ya what else. Come on, I'll get you started. *(Heads for the kitchen)*

ELI: Thanks, Sol. *(ELI hustles off, followed by EVE)*

EVE: Shave and comb your hair, Eli.

HESH: (*Slyly, to PINNIE*) What you been doin', Pin?

PINNIE: WHY DON'T YOU GO BLOW YOUR HORN YOU FUCKING IDIOT.

HESH: Excuse me. (*PINNIE exits to kitchen. To no one.*) Sensitive, ain't he? (*Enter RAY. He looks ashen and withdrawn.*) Al ain't here.

RAY: I know. The coffee ready?

HESH: Eli 's gonna be a busboy, because Dudi is sick.

RAY: Really?

HESH: You all right, Ray?

RAY: No. (*Transition with music. Lights dim down while Dinner is cleared. GINA enters Tali's room.*)

SCENE SIX

(*After dinner. ELI joins HESH, ROSIE and EVE at the family table and collapses into a chair.*)

EVE: So, Eli?

ELI: It was an experience.

HESH: You could make it a profession. Like me.

EVE: Not like you.

HESH: It's never too late.

ELI: No, thank you, Hesh.

EVE: (*To HESH*) You would die.

HESH: I'm gonna die anyway.

EVE: Why talk like that and bring Evil on yourself?

HESH: Excuse me.

ELI: Dudi went home?

HESH: Yeah.

ELI: He 's coming back?

HESH: In the morning.

ROSIE: What's wrong with him?

HESH: He has an affliction.

EVE: His affliction is in his head.

ELI: I'm happy to serve. I don't mind serving. But it's my legs. I'm out of shape. And...There's something about people and food.

ROSIE: This is news to you?

ELI: Very demanding, that's all I can say.

ROSIE: Did you just arrive from another planet?

ELI: Very demanding and very intimate. Very close to the bone.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: They used to bring the bread on little trucks. Wheelbarrows. Carts. A boy. A boy pushed the wheelbarrow full of bread. He is a Jewish boy. This boy is terrified, of course.

GINA: Yes.

_____ *In the dining room:*

EVE: You did a good job, Eli.

ELI: I could barely keep up.

EVE: We appreciate it. Have something to eat now.

ELI: No. Maybe later.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: He is playing a dangerous game. And there is a mother. Her life depended. That's why the boy is frightened. He wants to steal bread for his mother. But the Jewish Kapos would kill him for it. Criminals. I can see his face now.

_____ *In the dining room:*

HESH: *(To ELI)* It's good to see the other side, eh?

ELI: I could feel the terror. Someone was telling me -- Solly -- he has nightmares, he 's in a dining room and he can't keep up. He gets lost between the dining room and the kitchen. He 's in the kitchen and he can't find the dining room.

HESH: We all have those nightmares. Last night I dreamt the dining room was in another building. I am crossing between buildings, and I can't find the kitchen. I can't remember which building. Where's the kitchen? Behind me, sixteen people are waiting for their food. Then it became like in Rome or someplace. I was lost completely.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: The noise. It's too crowded, and they bring more starving people in. You can hear the screwing going on in the corners, and the scratching for crumbs.

_____ *In the dining room:*

ELI: It's all in the rhythm. You have to keep pace. You forget something, you get off the pace, it's terrifying.

ROSIE: Why terrifying?

ELI: Because everyone gets angry and frustrated. They're hungry, they're waiting, and they've paid for their dinner. Food will do that. Then the kitchen is angry because the tension is too high, and Pinnie starts yelling and throwing food around. And you, you yourself are angry.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: Everyone feels like they deserve to eat.

GINA: Yes. The nastiest Kapo, the stupidest kid.

TALI: We made uniforms in exchange for life and bread.

GINA: I know.

_____ *In the dining room:*

ROSIE: What are you thinking, Eli?

ELI: Why don't we live with God? Why are we here on this earth?

ROSIE: *(To ELI.)* How can you ask such an irrevelant and stupid question?

ELI: How is it irrelevant? How is it stupid? *(ROSIE starts out in a rage)* The Nazis couldn't kill God. They wanted to BE God.

EVE: Stop it, Eli.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: They came into the ghetto, Rimkowski and the Germans and the Polish policemen and the Kapos. They offered to relieve the crowding and the suffering. They wanted twenty thousand children. Otherwise, we would all starve. Rimkowski begged and pleaded and harangued. Twenty thousand children must be offered up, so that the rest can live. And we gave him the children. Twenty thousand children.

GINA: Did you hear? Rimkowski? Later, on his way to the gas chamber, the Jewish Kapos beat him to death.

TALI: I heard. I was glad. Good.

_____ *In the dining room, ROSIE returns:*

ROSIE: I'll tell you what we are NOT here for, Eli: we are not here to be murdered! Never again!

EVE: Rosie --

ROSIE: How dare they? How dare they take us from our homes and line us up in the streets and spit on us and march us to our deaths? How dare they? How dare they even think of it?

ELI: Who were those people?

ROSIE: I'll tell you -- the "Aryans," they wanted everybody to be blonde, the fucking idiots! -- police, railroad men, nasty little shopkeepers, peasants, businessmen -- they believed!

ELI: They were nothings. Ordinary, frightened, confused nonentities.

ROSIE: No! They were believers, Eli! Fervent believers!

ELI: Sleeping dogs. Let them lie.

ROSIE: They believed in it, Eli! Let them rot in Hell!

ELI: They do. They are.

ROSIE: I doubt it. They are feeding their faces and going on with their lives.

_____ *In TALI'S room, GINA bursts into tears:*

TALI: You poor thing.

_____ *In the dining room:*

ELI: Who are you?

ROSIE: Screw that.

ELI: You are an aggrieved, unrepentant, angry soul.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: Why do we cling so? Why can't we let go?

_____ *In the dining room:*

ROSIE: I've had enough, Eli. That's it.

ELI: I'm sorry.

ROSIE: That's it. *(Storms out.)*

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: I'll help you. We'll help each other.

_____ *In the dining room:*

EVE: Go and talk to her, Eli. *(ELI stays.)*

HESH: I'll clean up.

EVE: No. Leave it for the morning. Let's turn out the lights and go to bed. *(Dim down on the dining room, stay up on GINA and TALI.)*

SCENE SEVEN

(Later. Sound of a Saxophone in the dark. It is HESH, loaded, in the kitchen. Dim up on SECUNDA and ELI in the dining room with the bottle of vodka.)

ELI: When the big bomb went off, I thought, "Nature has given up on us. We sit poised now on the brink of annihilation."

SECUNDA: That's good.

ELI: Now I think of the life of this wonderful woman, Tali, who is now speaking, when only hours ago she was unconscious.

SECUNDA: Yes. It's wonderful.

ELI: What must it be like for her?

SECUNDA: I think we should eat something, Eli.

ELI: Eat? What for?

SECUNDA: So you can think and talk at the same time.

ELI: I can think and talk at the same time.

SECUNDA: Vodka on an empty stomach. It's not good.

ELI: In fact, that's what I'm doing all the time.

SECUNDA: What? Explain, please.

ELI: I'm interested in speech. In language. In other words, what's the big struggle? For us Jews, it is the Word. And you?

SECUNDA: What?

ELI: Are you a Catholic?

SECUNDA: No.

ELI: Why not?

SECUNDA: I lost faith.

ELI: I'm sorry. Is that why you drink?

SECUNDA: Only God knows why I drink. (*Laughs*)

ELI: You are man of few words, Al. (*Laughs*) Deep with Slavic irony. (*Laughs*)

SECUNDA: Are you getting weak?

ELI: No, I'm getting strong.

SECUNDA: We better walk around.

ELI: What's that music?

SECUNDA: It's Hesh, in the kitchen.

ELI: My God, he sounds just like a Negro. You wanna hear a Polish joke?

SECUNDA: No.

ELI: I'm sorry. I feel terrible.

SECUNDA: You better eat.

ELI: I feel great. Light as a feather.

SECUNDA: No more vodka for you.

ELI: Stop taking care of me. I have a question. But I forgot what it is.

SECUNDA: Okay.

ELI: Lemme think. (*Pause*) Have you known love? (*Pause*) That wasn't the question, but it'll have to do. (*Pause*)

SECUNDA: Yes.

ELI: What is it? Don't tell me, I know. It's when you care more than about yourself. Love thy neighbor, yes? Yes? (*SECUNDA cries*) Oh shit, Al. That wasn't the question anyway. Stop. God, this is a Polish joke. (*SECUNDA laughs*) The question is -- (*Can't remember*) It had to do with the Word, Al. That's why Rosie is fed up with me.

SECUNDA: Why? (*A pause*)

ELI: Shit. Fuck it.

SECUNDA: Okay. (*Stands*)

ELI: Why did Pharoah -- no -- why did the Lord God harden Pharoah's heart? This is what I'm trying to say, which is, the Bible....Was it to show His Power? Excuse me, but it's not understandable. What I mean is, not on this level, it has levels, it has a Word/God level, you can't make meanings out of it, or take it literally, or take it like a metaphor -- you follow me?

SECUNDA: Yeah, sure. Here comes Eve. (*Enter EVE*)

EVE: What are you guys doing? You know what time it is? Who is that playing?, is that Hesh?

ELI: Which question should I answer?

EVE: Go to bed. What will Rosie think? Al, Pinnie will kill you. You have to work tomorrow. Go. (*Exit ELI and SECUNDA. The saxophone music continues as GINA leaves TALIS room, and EVE crosses the dining room toward the kitchen. Then the music stops. GINA is alone in the lobby. She hears someone enter the dining room from the kitchen -- HESH -- rises and joins him.*)

GINA: Don't you sleep?

HESH: Don't you?

GINA: I heard you playing.

HESH: Oh. Sorry.

GINA: No. I was up anyway, with Tali.

HESH: How is she?

GINA: She is light. Very light.

HESH: Did you, uh...?

GINA: Yes, I like the way you play. Very sad, very angry.

HESH: I wail. I wail like a banshee.

GINA: What is a banshee?

HESH: Uh, I think it's Irish. I lament. Lamentation. At the same time, I try to remember the tune. That's Jazz.

GINA: I like jazz. Are you married?

HESH: No. My life is based on avoiding pain and seeking pleasure. Mainly avoiding pain. A woman could never stand that kind of life. Exhilaration followed by gloom. Vice/versa, actually.

GINA: Ah, you are a drug addict.

HESH: Yes.

GINA: Are you...now?

HESH: Yes, I am. Why?

GINA: I didn't ask you why.

HESH: Actually, it's anger and fear. I'm angry at myself because I fear for myself.

GINA: You don't know why.

HESH: No, probably not.

GINA: You have family here, you have help.

HESH: Yeah. But I can't stand waiting on tables anymore. That much I know. I can't stand it. It's humiliating, the demands people make, the way they treat you. It's not like Europe here. Here, it represents failure. And I won't beg.

GINA: We must all beg.

HESH: Excuse me?

GINA: We beg.

HESH: We beg for what?

GINA: For release. Yes?

HESH: Yes, I suppose you could say that.

GINA: Were you a soldier? In the war?

HESH: Me? No.

GINA: Oh. I'm sorry.

HESH: Don't worry about it. They took one look at my arms and sent me to a C.C. camp. It was like jail. *(Pause)* I played in a band. I guess I should say, hello. Something.

GINA: Hello?

HESH: To Tali.

GINA: No, it's allright.

HESH: I can't right now, anyway. Breakfast comin' up...

GINA: She scares you. Yes?

HESH: Yes.

GINA: Because she sees. Because you feel like a liar.

HESH: I didn't say that.

GINA: Yes, it's because of the contradictions. That's what it's like to be near the dying. You feel bad, but it's not you. You think, I should feel something, but it's fear or confusion, or guilt. Or, soon she'll be gone. Vanished. Nothing. Relief. Should I be happy or sad? What act should I put on? Then, fear, when is it my turn? No? Something like that, yes?

HESH: Something like that. *(The light comes on in TALI'S room, and RAY enters. He sits.)*

GINA: I remember, when I was in Morrocco, the same feeling of confusion.

HESH: Confusion?

GINA: Yes. It's a confusion of the sacred and the profane. That's how it is when you're on drugs all the time.

HESH: Heroin?

GINA: Opium, hashish.

HESH: With heroin, it's true, you find release -- peace and detachment. Five minutes of serenity. And with the reefer, you dream that you're having a spiritual experience, and everything tastes good.

GINA: Yes, I remember how the cooking...the cooking kept me together somehow. The cooking all around me, and my own. Right there next to all the suffering was all the

cooking. The impressions were almost too hard to take....I don't how I got out of there. I was alone. I was claustrophobic. I weighed seventy-five pounds. I could have stayed there, stoned, for the rest of my days....There is the sense of the harsh realities and the love we all have for playing in our own shit. Yes?

HESH: Yeah, okay.

GINA: It all comes back, all that mixing up of things, the harsh realities with the dreams, the sacred with the profane. This guy I know, Wayne, he's not a Jew, he wants to go to Palestine and buy boats. He says there are boats there, boats from the refugees, he wants to buy them, bring them back, fix them up and sell them. Don't you think that's strange?

HESH: Yes, I do.

GINA: To this day, I still don't know how I got out of Morocco. They put me in a hospital for crazy persons and I was just sitting there. Something picked me up and sat me down in front of the Consul General. He was a nice young man and he badly wanted to help. But I couldn't say a word. I could not speak. I went on a journey, totally speechless, absolutely passive....(*Enter SECUNDA*) To America.

HESH: Excuse me.

GINA: I had to learn how to speak again.

HESH: (*Standing*) Excuse me.

GINA: Oh.

HESH: I better shave, get ready, make it through tomorrow. Still here, AI?

SECUNDA: It's a buffet this morning. Just you and me and Sol.

HESH: I know.

SECUNDA: (*As HESH exits*) Hello, Gina.

GINA: How are you?

SECUNDA: I must have coffee. Coffee?

GINA: Yes, please.

_____ *In TALI'S ROOM, as TALI awakens:*

RAY: How are you, Darling? Did you sleep?

TALI: I dream of the Master.

_____ *In the dining room, AL serves coffee:*

GINA: I can smell the vodka.

SECUNDA: I'll clean up, go to work.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

RAY: You mean like the Baal Shem? Like Rabbi Nachman?

TALI: I never knew Rabbis. I was a secular person, from a secular family. Like Eli.

_____ *In the dining room:*

GINA: Why?

SECUNDA: Why?

GINA: The vodka. It will kill you.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

RAY: Who is the Master?

TALI: There's a place where you go. It's in the country. Where the Master lives. The light shines on it just so, like the light of childhood.

_____ *In the dining room:*

SECUNDA: I don't plan it. The light is a funny way, in the dusk. Maybe my throat feels something. Maybe a feeling. I don't think I'll drink. And then the night comes, I'm drinking. I don't think I'll drink the bottle. Just two, three, drinks. Then I can't stop.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

RAY: Is it a house?

TALI: It's a house, where the Master lives. He is a Sage, and people go there. It's a beautiful place. There are many birds, and trees, and the air is sweet.

_____ *In the dining room:*

GINA: You knew my mother?

SECUNDA: Yes. And I knew you.

GINA: I don't remember you.

SECUNDA: I had a shop. A tea shop. With sweets. Once they brought you in.

GINA: Who brought me?

SECUNDA: Your mother and Tali. With the boy.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

RAY: When I was a kid we went to *Shul* in the woods.

TALI: You?

RAY: Yes, my father and me and my brothers.

TALI: In Poland?

RAY: No, this was here in America. My father would get us up early Saturday mornings and walk us up a dirt road and into the woods where the *Shul* was, a small place on some relative's land. I thought it was very mysterious, that this should be so.

_____ *In the dining room:*

GINA: You got them out of Lodz.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: You felt something.

RAY: Yes.

_____ *In the dining room:*

SECUNDA: I got Natalia out. It was too late for the boy.

GINA: I know. I'm sorry.

SECUNDA: Your mother was already out, with Horowitz.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: It's not a synagogue.

RAY: No?

TALI: The Master's house. It's just a house, and people go there.

_____ *In the dining room:*

GINA: Did you know my father?

SECUNDA: Yes. I knew him.

GINA: What...what was he like?

SECUNDA: Oh, he was a...(Polish)

GINA: A Ladies man.

SECUNDA: Yes. Very handsome. Charming. All men have a weakness. You look like him.

GINA: That's what they say.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: This is a dream I remember. You know? This is a dream I had as a girl, and now I revisit it, yes?

RAY: Yes.

TALI: I see it again now, fresh and new.

_____ *In the dining room:*

SECUNDA: I bought her out with my store. I sold it to a German Pole, from Danzig. He thought he was a big shot in those days. On top of the world. No doubt they hanged him when the war ended. I hope so. (*Laughs*) I brought her here, to America, where she fell in love with Ray.

GINA: Do you ever want to go back?

SECUNDA: No.

GINA: You were in love?

SECUNDA: Oh, yes. And I am still. (*Pause*) Ray reminds me very much of your father.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: They go there to learn from the Master, and to refresh themselves. There are many birds there, and beautiful trees, and flowers in the meadow, and a lawn. And the people suffer.

RAY: Why?

TALI: They are not clean, and the Master is far away.

RAY: But I thought....

TALI: I would like a cigarette.

RAY: You're not supposed to smoke.

TALI: I would like a cigarette. *(RAY offers her a cigarette and a light)* Ah. It's very good.

_____ *In the dining room:*

SECUNDA: So strange. A beautiful woman. A life of horror and wonder. The love of men in her life. And then she finds safety, and then she is struck down. Very cruel, very stupid. *(He stands abruptly. Blackout.)*

End Act Two

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

(Later in the morning. RAY is still with TALI in TALI'S room. EVE catches PINNIE in the entrance to the dining room.)

EVE: Why do you feel tired?

PINNIE: I don't know why I feel tired.

EVE: You look better today.

PINNIE: I don't feel good.

EVE: What do you feel?

PINNIE: It's my stomach. Everything ends up there.

EVE: It's the smoking.

PINNIE: It's the tension of living with an argument.

EVE: It's the smoking. It's the smoking and the overwork and the tension in your body. It's not me. Do you think you're immortal?

PINNIE: I tell you how I'm feeling and all you do is make a point.

EVE: Don't resent me and then expect me to be nice to you on top of it.

PINNIE: What? Did you not hear what I just said?

EVE: It's not fair.

PINNIE: I can't talk to you. You don't talk. This is not a conversation. I say something, then you give instruction, you give advice.

EVE: What did I say?

PINNIE: You don't remember?

EVE: When? (*PINNIE growls*) Please don't growl at me. I am not a dog. Five O Clock in the morning, you're walking to town. You sleep four hours a night. You are not immortal.

PINNIE: Thank you, Eve.

EVE: Rest, Pinnie! (*Tearfully*) I'll take care of you. (*PINNIE growls. SECUNDA enters from the kitchen. EVE recovers as PINNIE moves away from her.*) Good morning, Al.

SECUNDA: Morning, Eve.

EVE: I'll open the office. (*Leaves*)

PINNIE: You okay?

SECUNDA: Headache.

PINNIE: All right. Drink some tomato juice. Take a few aspirin.

SECUNDA: Yeah.

PINNIE: The coffee. Should I make the coffee?

SECUNDA: No, no. I'm doing it, Pinnie. I just wanted you to know I was here.

PINNIE: Okay. (*SECUNDA goes. PINNIE holds his head in his hands. ELI enters, watches him a moment, then quietly joins him.*)

ELI: I was wondering what it's like not to be here anymore.

PINNIE: You're checking out?

ELI: Not here in the Catskills. Here.

PINNIE: Existentially?

ELI: Correct.

PINNIE: And?

ELI: We have to leave something behind. And at the same time, remember the dead. Always we have done this. Our religion is based upon it. Remember the ancestry, preserve the blood, pass it on. (*LEON enters.*)

PINNIE: (*To LEON*) You're up early.

LEON: Pin, can I talk to you?

PINNIE: Certainly.

LEON: (*Taking him aside*) Pinnie.

PINNIE: Don't grab me, Leon.

LEON: About the hotel.

PINNIE: I told you already, the answer is No.

LEON: I don't wanna sit at the same table as that woman anymore.

PINNIE: N – O.

LEON: Did you hear what I just said?

PINNIE: Who? Gina?

LEON: Yeah.

PINNIE: You don't wanna sit next to Gina?

LEON: Correct.

PINNIE: Why? What's wrong there?

LEON: She 's a Manhater.

PINNIE: She hates me, too?

LEON: I don't wanna be around it.

PINNIE: Fine. Eat in the kitchen.

LEON: I'll talk to Al. But the subject is not closed.

PINNIE: What subject?

LEON: The other subject. *(PINNIE groans. LEON exits to kitchen. PINNIE rejoins ELI. In TALI'S room, RAY stands and leaves quietly.)*

ELI: *(To PINNIE)* Pharoah's heart was hardened so that the Jews should suffer. Why?

PINNIE: I don't know why. *(Pause)* Okay. Why?

ELI: I don't know why either. I'm only asking. The way I was raised, Pinnie, I knew nothing of Judaism. Until the Nazis came along, I couldn't care less if I was a Jew or not a Jew. When they want to kill you for it, you start to ask questions. Now I'm getting old, I'm even more interested in what it means. Now nothing is more interesting, not even revenge. Is that a small miracle, or what?

PINNIE: Yes. It's also hard to believe.

ELI: What would you do, kill Germans?

PINNIE: Yeah.

ELI: How many?

PINNIE: Eye for an eye, child for a child.

ELI: And the Rumanians? The Croats? The Ukranians?

PINNIE: Line 'em up. For every ten, we shoot one. Maybe two.

ELI: Rosie thinks the Germans should be put in cages. The Gestapo. The industrialists. The bureaucrats. They should be put in cages, in a zoo somewhere, and for a nickel each let the children of the world have a chance to spit on them.

PINNIE: I like it.

ELI: It will never happen. (*LEON re-enters, and SECUNDA pokes his head out.*)

SECUNDA: You want coffee there, Pinnie?

PINNIE: No! (*SECUNDA goes back into the kitchen.*)

ELI: I've pondered, and I've come to certain conclusions.

LEON: (*Joining them*) About what?

ELI: What is the struggle of mankind?

LEON: Come on, Eli.

ELI: What?

LEON: Do we have to?

PINNIE: Yes.

LEON: To survive? No. To stay young? No. To have many women? No.

ELI: No. Man is weak, he knows he 's weak, and his struggle is against his weaknesses. In the struggle against his weakness, the Jew has a way. It is an ancient way, and it works.

LEON: What is this way?

ELI: Ask Pinnie.

LEON: Pin?

PINNIE: The Ten Commandments. And six hundred and thirteen laws plus commentary, and commentary on the commentary.

ELI: But here is the question: is it over now, Pinchas?: Is there no Law now forever?

PINNIE: I don't know. That's not for me to say.

ELI: According to some, the Law is over. According to some, the only law now is self-preservation. And when they say that, they mean preservation of the Jews. That we must prevail. That there must always be Jews. Somewhere on earth, there must be Jews. *(RAY comes out of TALI'S room to the desk in the lobby.)*

LEON: Why, Eli?

ELI: I can't explain why at the moment.

LEON: I don't think I agree with their theory.

ELI: Too bad.

LEON: I hate all that chauvinism.

ELI: You? You're kidding me.

LEON: We should keep a low profile.

ELI: I wasn't talking to you in the first place.

LEON: You're so fucking naive.

ELI: Go have something to eat, Leon.

LEON: I've about had it with you, Eli.

ELI: What do I care? I give a fuck about your stupid opinions?

PINNIE: That's enough. Where's Ray? Where's Hesh? What time is it? Come on, I've got work to do. *(PINNIE exits into the kitchen. LEON and ELI stare at each other.)*

LEON: You got a bug up your ass, or what?

ELI: I don't like your attitude.

LEON: What attitude? *(Enter RAY from the lobby.)*

ELI: Especially towards the women and children.

LEON: What?

ELI: You heard me.

RAY: What 's going on here?

LEON: *(To RAY)* I don't need to listen to this.

ELI: Sit down, Ray.

LEON: I need this like I need a hole in the head. *(Starts off)*

RAY: What's the matter?

LEON: *(Of ELI)* This idiot opened his mouth to me!

RAY: Okay, forget about it.

LEON: Throw him out of the hotel!

RAY: I can't do that.

ELI: I'm sorry.

RAY: Let it go, Leon.

LEON: This is the last time I come here!

RAY: Okay.

LEON: That's the last time!

ELI: *(To LEON)* I'm sorry I had to say it.

LEON: And that's final!

ELI: *(As LEON starts off)* But it's true!

LEON: Ray, I could sell this place right out from under you in one minute! You hear me? One minute and it's gone! One minute! *(Exits)*

RAY: I heard you! Go ahead! *(Pause. To ELI)* What did you say to him?

ELI: Between you and me, the way he fools around, how he talks about women -- it's bullshit, and I told him so.

RAY: He 's afraid. That's all.

ELI: Fine and good. It's none of my business. I'm sorry. Excuse me. *(He starts off, dim out. RAY goes to kitchen and ELI to the hall. The stage is empty for a moment – then FEDUNN appears in TALI'S door. He enters and stares at her. She starts awake, then*

MURRAY C. comes out of the kitchen and DUDI appears in the lobby. FEDUNN runs downstairs, where he is trapped by DUDI and MURRAY C.)

SCENE TWO

(A moment later. MURRAY C., DUDI and FEDUNN enter the dining room. In TALI 'S room, TALI sits straight up.)

MURRAY C. Sit down, kid. What's his name?

DUDI: Fedunn.

MURRAY C.: Sit down, Fedunn.

FEDUNN: I didn't do nothin' but deliver the milk.

MURRAY C.: That's not what I heard. *(To DUDI)* Is that what you heard?

DUDI: I heard he was sneaking around in the rooms.

MURRAY C.: That's what I heard.

DUDI: I heard he was stealing shit.

MURRAY C.: Exactly what I heard.

DIDI: I heard he was going into places where he don't belong. I also heard that he advertised his pecker.

MURRAY C.: That's what I heard. After all, he 's a peckerwood.

DUDI: Yaaah! You gotta big pecker, Fedunn?

FEDUNN: No.

DUDI: It must be stupendous, or why would he show it off?

FEDUNN: I didn't.

DUDI: Did ya have a hard-on then, or what?

MURRAY C.: He couldn't control himself. Jewish women make him crazy. Right, Fedunn?

FEDUNN: No.

DUDI: What if I showed you my thing, Fedunn? Yaaaah!

FEDUNN: No!

MURRAY C.: Go ahead, Dudi.

DUDI: Yeah, I'll show it to ya.

FEDUNN: I don't wanna see it! You fuck!

DUDI: This is an insult. He insulted me.

MURRAY C.: I think you should look at it and give it a kiss.

FEDUNN: No! Go fuck yourself!

DUDI: You hear that, Murray?

MURRAY C.: Yeah, I think you should look at Dudi's whanger and give it a kiss.

FEDUNN: No. Lemme go.

MURRAY C.: And then say you're sorry for the insult.

DUDI: You have to apologize to the lady.

MURRAY C.: Show it to him, Dude.

FEDUNN: Please don't.

MURRAY C.: Then I think you will kiss it and say you're sorry. And after that, you will apologize to the lady.

FEDUNN: No. I won't. (*D. unzippers his fly.*) Please! I'll scream!

MURRAY C.: You yell and I'll smash your face in.

DUDI: I'm gonna smash his face in anyway. He 's a fuckin' Uke. They're all alike -- the Fedunns, the Stolgradskys, the Patashniks -- they're all related, and they dislike Jews.

MURRAY C.: You know me, Fedunn?

FEDUNN: Yeah.

MURRAY C.: Who am I?

FEDUNN: Murray.

MURRAY C.: Which Murray?

FEDUNN: Murray Cohen.

MURRAY C.: Good boy. You know what I did in the War?

FEDUNN: You won medals.

MURRAY C.: That's right. I won medals. Why, Fedunn?

FEDUNN: I don't know.

DUDI: He don't know.

MURRAY C.: I killed a lot of people. And do you know who they were?

FEDUNN: German soldiers.

MURRAY C.: Not just Germans, Fedunn. I killed Hungarians and Rumanians and Ukes, also.

DUDI: Some he killed with his bare hands.

MURRAY C.: You know why?

FEDUNN: You were an American Soldier.

MURRAY C.: Correct. But not just that. I did it because they harbored hatred against the Jews. And that's one thing that really makes me mad, Fedunn.

DUDI: They not only harbored, they executed.

MURRAY C.: You know what I liked to use best, Dudi? Wire.

DUDI: Why is that, Murray?

MURRAY C.: Because with good sharp wire you can strangle a man and cut his head off at the same time. Piano wire is good. But you have to be strong.

DUDI: (*To FEDUNN*) He could do that. Because he 's strong.

MURRAY C.: Yeah. Did you know that a man still sees when his head 's cut off?

DUDI: Gawhead.

MURRAY C.: Yeah, for second he sees his body goin' one way and him goin' another way.

DUDI: Yaaah!

FEDUNN: Come on, lemme go home.

MURRAY C.: Take it out, Dude.

FEDUNN: Lemme go home.

MURRAY C.: Let him kiss it and say he 's sorry and then he can apologize to Rosie and then he can go home.

DUDI: Okay.

FEDUNN: I won't do it.

MURRAY C.: Maybe that's not such a good idea.

DUDI: No?

MURRAY C.: No. I think I will strangle him instead. *(In TALI'S room she stands and makes it out the door.)*

FEDUNN: No, wait!

MURRAY C.: Yeah, gimme a napkin, Dudi.

FEDUNN: Wait!

MURRAY C.: Too late, Georgie.

FEDUNN: Okay, okay!

MURRAY C.:*(Slapping him)* Shut up!

DUDI: What are you doin', Mur?

MURRAY C.: Gimme the napkin.

DUDI: *(Handing one to him)* Here, Mur.

FEDUNN: Please! (*MURRAY C. suddenly stuffs the napkin in FEDUNN'S mouth and grabs him by the throat. DUDI is horrified.*)

DUDI: Hey, Mur! Quit it, Man! Murray, stop it! (*MURRAY C., in a paroxysm of rage, is strangling the boy. Enter HESH*)

HESH: What's goin' on? What the fuck are you doing, Cohen?

MURRAY C.: I'm gonna murder this little prick!

HESH: Hey, Murray! Murray!

MURRAY C.: Nobody move! Nobody come near me!

HESH: Murray, don't kill him! Don't kill him! Murray!

MURRAY C.: (*To HESH*) Stay away from me! (*FEDUNN is near death. To FEDUNN*) Say you're sorry! Say you'll never do it again! (*But FEDUNN can't speak -- enter TALI*)

TALI: Let me have the boy! (*MURRAY C. looks up, but doesn't release FEDUNN.*)

MURRAY C.: (*To FEDUNN*) Say it, you sonofabitch! (*Now TALI is very firm.*)

TALI: Let me have the boy, please. (*MURRAY C. hesitates*) Let me have the boy! (*MURRAY C. throws FEDUNN to the floor, then exits fast, followed by DUDI. FEDUNN crawls toward TALI. Music. TALI sinks to her knees. Blackout.*)

SCENE THREE

(*Later. In the dining room, LEON being waited on by HESH and SOLLY; in the lobby, ROSIE, EVE, and GINA; in TALI'S room, SECUNDA sits with TALI.*)

ROSIE: What's with Tali and the Gentile kid?

GINA: She saved the boy's life.

EVE: The father is gone and the mother wanders all day.

ROSIE: Eve!

EVE: What?

ROSIE: We know that. I didn't ask you about that. I asked about Tali.

GINA: She sees him.

ROSIE: What is that supposed to mean?

GINA: She sees a beautiful boy, a boy who steals. I'll tell you something. Everyone thinks he hates us, hates the Jews. But I don't think so.

ROSIE: Certainly he hates us!

GINA: I think it's love, the other side of hate.

ROSIE: That's ridiculous! Are you crazy?

GINA: Yes. You can believe what you want. But that's why he steals, that's why he prowls around. Tali saw her son, her dead son, who was not killed by the Germans. He was killed by Jews, by criminal Jewish Kapos.

EVE: How could that happen?

GINA: The boy was a thief.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: *(In Polish)* I think I am taking on water. *(Laughs)*

_____ *In the lobby:*

GINA: You are in the Ghetto, in Lodz. There is no father. In 1939 the father runs away to America. Maybe he is in New York right now, selling women's clothing, the sonofabitch.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: Am I?

SECUNDA: I don't know, Tali.

TALI: *(Throwing off her blanket.)* Take a look.

_____ *In the lobby:*

GINA: You have a teenage boy, a brat. Spoiled. Nasty. He is stealing bread. Even from his mother, he hides bread. Tali knows. But what can she do? She has no control over the boy.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: Why are you crying, Secunda? Who 's going to take care of you? You're not a Jew...

_____ *In the lobby:*

GINA: In the middle of the night, the Jewish Kapos come. They have come on their own. Three kapos -- almost-starving young men. They have come for the boy. They have had enough, they have decided to kill him for his crimes...The boy is caught. The boy seeks protection from his mother. He begs and pleads, he hangs on to her dress. (*EVE bursts into tears*) They took him from her and disposed of him.

_____ *In the dining room, LEON finishes eating, takes out a roll of bills and peels off three twenties.*

LEON: Solly! Heshel! (*LEON tips SOLLY and HESH twenty dollars each. SOLLY thanks him politely, HESH quickly pockets the money:*)

LEON: Here you go. I'm leaving after lunch. Solly, you'll do well.

SOLLY: Thank you, Sir.

LEON: Where's Al?

HESH: He ain't around.

LEON: Hesh --

HESH: Yeah?

LEON: Get normal.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: (*In POLISH*) Oh, what we have seen in our days, Secunda!

SECUNDA: That we have, that we have.

TALI: Angels and beasts, Secunda. (*In Yiddish.*) You must give me permission to go now, Secunda.

SECUNDA: Yes, Tali. You can go....

TALI: (*Relaxing*) Ah. Good.

_____ *In the lobby:*

GINA: A month later, a miracle happens: she gets out of Lodz.

ROSIE: How did she do it?

GINA: Secunda bought her out.

EVE: My God, I never knew....

_____ *In the dining room:*

HESH: *(Bussing the table)* What's normal, Leon? I don't know any normal people. Do you know any normal people?

LEON: Normal means normal. Normal ambition. Normal reality. Un-doped.

HESH: I agree with you.

LEON: *(Surprised)* You do?

HESH: Yeah. I do. *(Exits to kitchen)*

_____ *In the lobby:*

EVE: The kid just wanted to live, to survive.

ROSIE: They should have fought back! None of this would have happened!

GINA: Easy for you to say.

ROSIE: Really?

GINA: You weren't there! *(Exits upstairs. EVE goes to the hall and ROSIE sits down as HESH re-enters the dining room from the kitchen.. In TALI'S room, ELI enters.)*

_____ *In the dining room.*

HESH: I'm supposed to be asking you for a job, Leon.

LEON: I know.

HESH: But I'm not.

LEON: *(Relieved)* Stay here and clean up your act, Hesh. My last counsel.

HESH: Hey, you think I don't know I've been kidding myself? Like I don't want what other people want? Like money? Like nice clothes and good food? Like my own space? Like a nice apartment? A new car? Hey. I'm thinking especially of the women in my life.

LEON: The first one was a good one. What was that, ladies underwear?

HESH: Yeah.

LEON: They had millions.

HESH: They, not she.

LEON: She was beautiful, my friend. A princess.

_____ *In TALI'S room, ELI enters with a tray of tea and cakes:*

TALI: What was the first word, Eli? In Kabbalah. Remember?

ELI: I don't know. Yah?

TALI: YAH. I love it. YAH. Good.

ELI: How are you feeling?

TALI: I feel tired, but good. YAH. *(Beams)*

_____ *In the dining room, where SOLLY enters.*

HESH: *(Looking at the silverware)* I thought you polished the fuckin' silverware, Sol.

SOLLY: I did polish the fuckin' silverware.

HESH: Doesn't look like it.

SOLLY: Polish it yourself with your fuckin' nose, Hesh! *(Exits back to kitchen)*

_____ *In TALI's room, RAY and GINA enter. ELI stands.*

TALI: Ah. Here you are. Here you are. Men are always confusing sex and love. Don't you think, Eli?

ELI: They can't help it. *(RAY laughs)*

TALI: Yes, it's funny. It's funny, isn't it? *(They all laugh)*

_____ *In the dining room:*

HESH: You know, I'm blowin' my horn, smokin the ol' hemp, sittin' around, staring at the fuckin' wall.

LEON: You still do it. You're a fuckin' catatonic half the time.

HESH: But I loved 'em all. Especially the first one, even though she yelled a lot.

LEON: I can't stomach that kind of thing. I want someone to yell at me, I go to the boxing matches.

_____ *In TALI'S room:*

TALI: Eli.

ELI: Yes?

TALI: You brought cake.

ELI: Yes.

RAY: And tea.

TALI: Yes. We'll have some cake and tea. Good.

RAY: Almost time to take Gina to the train, Tali.

TALI: Oh, there's time. There's time...I'll say goodbye.

GINA: *(Alert)* Yes, there's time.

TALI: We'll have tea and cake.

GINA: Yes, Tali.

TALI: Are you afraid, Ray? Don't be...*(In Yiddish)* There's nothing to be afraid of. I feel very happy now.

_____ *In the dining room, SOLLY re-enters.*

HESH: *(Standing)* So long, Leon. Your limousine is waiting. *(Starts off)* Do your silver, Sol.

SOLLY: Yeah, yeah. *(HESH exits through the kitchen)*

LEON: Take my advice, Sol, I'm older than you.

SOLLY: What?

LEON: Don't play gin. And don't go to Florida.

SOLLY: Okay.

LEON: Go to college. The G.I. Bill.

SOLLY: Thank you.

LEON: Mark my words, and get a future.

SOLLY: Okay, Leon. (*LEON exits through the lobby, where ROSIE follows him off and gives him a hug.*)

ROSIE: I'm sorry about Eli.

LEON: Don't be sorry. But take it easy on him, Rosie. (*ROSIE breaks into tears. SOLLY starts polishing silver in the dining room.*)

_____ *In TALI'S room.*

TALI: Ah, good. (*In Yiddish*) We'll have tea and cake...and then I'll go. (*Pause*) Okay?

GINA: Yes, Tali.

TALI: Ray?

RAY: (*Frozen.*) Yes....(*The atmosphere is one of extreme concentration as ELI pours and serves.*)

TALI: (*Marveling at the tea and cake.*) Oh! This is good! This is so good! (*TALI hands her cup and plate to ELI.*) Please...(*She lies back with a deep breath.*)

_____ *In the dining room: DUDI enters, as:*

_____ *In TALI'S room: TALI sits up wide-eyed, takes her last breath and falls into RAY and GINA's arms.*)

DUDI: Yaaaah! (*Blackout*)

SCENE FOUR

_____ Days later, in the dining room; all the chairs are up on the tables but one, where ELI, PINNIE, and RAY, wearing yarmulkes, sit over coffee; the Royal Manor hotel is obviously closed; late afternoon light streams through the windows:

ELI: Fall is coming. It's starting to get dark early.

PINNIE: And?

ELI: This gives me a feeling of dread. *(Pause)* At this moment my wife is on a boat.

PINNIE: And?

ELI: She is on a boat in the Atlantic ocean. This is a big ocean. This is a round planet.

RAY: I don't know how they did it. Tali, Gina. They came over by boat. She was afraid of confinement. Of rooms, of ceilings, of doors -- everything had to stay open, or she couldn't breathe.

ELI: I never heard her. I was not listening. The only voice I hear is myself.

PINNIE: Eli?

ELI: What?

PINNIE: Can you hear me?

ELI: Do I look deaf to you? Can't you keep two ideas in your head at the same time? Are we apes? Can you understand nothing about meaning? Do you think everything is on one level? Do you think the laws and commandments --

PINNIE: Which question are you asking?

ELI: Are for animals?

PINNIE: No.

RAY: *(To ELI.)* He 's trying to tell you that we are closing down the hotel for the --.

ELI: I thought I would go around America and write a book.

RAY: -- Winter.

PINNIE: And?

ELI: I decided not to.

PINNIE: Then what?

ELI: You can't get anything to eat in America. In America you got stupid good-lookin' guys with crew cuts cracking jokes about Jews. (*RAY laughs*) They make more money than you do. Too much stupidity, too much brutality, too much hatred. I was born here, but I am afraid.

PINNIE: So, you're going to Palestine?

ELI: I'm going to Israel. I'll join Rosie. I'll continue my studies.

PINNIE: Good, Eli.

ELI: But first I have one question to ask.

RAY: What, Eli?

ELI: What was the first utterance?

PINNIE: The what?

ELI: I'll tell you -- it was YAH! YAH! That's my opinion. And that's how we got molecules and planets and stars and us. Maybe a tale told by an idiot, yes?

RAY: I don't know.

ELI: Ray, in a hundred thousand years, what?

RAY: I don't know.

ELI: A hundred thousand years is nothing, Ray. A million years is nothing. Death is nothing. Everybody thinks he is made of something. His opinions, his habits, his feelings. But none of it is his, it's all shit from before, from the mother, the father, the first worm, how he is treated, how he is loved, how he is not loved. None of it belongs to him, nothing is in him but the possibility of a conscience. In a hundred thousand years it will be as though he was never born and never was. I ask you -- how can I walk upon this earth with thanksgiving? It's an impossibility. I can't do it. Maybe the *Shechina* will come in, God's Grace, or an Angel of Light? But there is no room in my heart. It is full to the brim with sorrow and disappointment. *Selah. (Blackout.)*

SCENE FIVE

(Night. All the chairs are up, and the stations are covered with tablecloths. Silence. Then, in TALI'S room, a shadowy figure appears. He lights a match. It is FEDUNN. Blackout.)

THE END

