

April, 2010

ALEKSANDAR NOVAKOVI

DRAW THE BORDER OVER MY BODY

VOJVODE VLAHOVI A 49 V

11 000 BEOGRAD

Serbia

011 2462 187

0644335 727

alnov75@yahoo.com

Translated from Serbian by author

DRAMATIS PERSONAE (the one and very same actor plays all the dramatis personae which are placed in the same row):

LADD, in his late twenties then eighteen

BOSS / PRINCIPAL / FATHER

MOTHER / WOMAN

GIRL FROM SCHOOL, 18-ish, GIRL-BOSS'S DAUGHTER, 20-ish

NOTICE:

Scenery must be made of light components that can turn into something different by combining them, like „Lego“. This is due to quick change of set. Costumes must be bland, signifying, „tabula rasa“ and, adding one or two details, their purpose changes as does the person that wears them

Scene one

Tourist office agency. Present. Huge working desks are placed in left and right corner of the room. Behind these desks are shelves filled with papers. There is phone on Boss's desk. Wall facing the audience is adorned with sights of world destinations: Thailand, Ibiza,. Cotte D'Azur, India, Australia, Paris, Dublin. BOSS, is in the left corner, strong man in his fifties, surrounded by papers scattered on the table, writing something on a piece of paper. LADD, is in the right corner, slim, attractive young man, late twenties. He is also up to his neck in the papers. Suddenly, BOSS caughs and leans back in the chair. He puts his papers aside.

BOSS:

That wraps it up for tonight.

LADD:

HM?

BOSS:

I said: That wraps it up for tonight, kiddo.

LADD:

Let me finnish this.

BOSS:

I order you to stop it. That's the order from your boss.

LADD:

Just a bit more. They will be checking us tomorrow.

BOSS:

Do you listen? Am I the boss? I am.

Boss stands up, picks up Ladd's papers and places them on the shelf behind him. Then he does the some thing with his papers

BOSS:

Do I have the right to hire and fire people? I do. Is it
time to stop. It is. And the reason is?

*BOSS swiftly opens up his drawer and takes a bottle of
whiskey out of it and then places it on the table*

BOSS:

And here it is- the alcohol! Reason of all miseries and
answer on all of the questions!

LADD:

They will be checking us tomorrow.

BOSS:

Leave it to me. Come o'er here.

LADD:

Your lady has forbidden you to....

BOSS(impersonating):

„Your lady has forbidden you to...” Pull the chair before I
get mad. Come on!

LADD gets up, hesitating to approach him

LADD:

Still, they will come tomorrow first thing in the
morning...

BOSS:

Kiddo, stop messing with me! I know how it looks like when
those looters arrive.

LADD:

I know.

BOSS:

I dislike that „I know“ of yours. It sound so accusing.

LADD:

I do not. I just think taht you are putting yourself
between the rock and the hard place.

BOSS:

Because of little „greasing up“? Cashola-payola? Boyo, I
am just a man trying to survive in the lousy times. Put
yourself inside my shoes. You would have done the same
thing for your wife and daughter, wouldn't you?

Pause

LADD:

I guess.

BOSS:

Your guess is right. Now, come o'er here.

LADD:

Ok, but just one for the road.

BOSS:

Not a drop more.

LADD:

OK.

*LADD comes to him, draws the chair to the Boss's table.
BOSS se licks his lips, takes the glasses from the desk and
pours the whiskey- They take glasses. LADD starts drinking.
BOSS grabs his arm*

BOSS:

Wait, wait! Let's have a toast! No need for rush, man!

LADD:

Sorry.

They get up. Moment of trepidation

BOSS:

For my partner and for my heir!

LADD:

Who?

BOSS:

You!

BOSS touches Ladd's glass with rim of his glass and drinks to the bottom. LADD is standing, shocked, with the glass in his hand

LADD:

Me?

BOSS:

Is there anyone else in the room? Yes, ladd, you!

LADD:

How come?

BOSS:

Copme, come, it ain't exactly the surprise. You work here three years, up to the neck with business, plus dating mydaughter for two years and, to add it up, doctor told me that my heart needs rest. It is better to retire while I still have time.

LADD:

This is out of a blue. Thanks.

BOSS:

Oh, come on. We are family now.

BOSS pats his shoulder

LADD:

But we ain't. I didn't marry your daughter.

BOSS:

No problemo. You will.

Pause

BOSS:

Why the face? It won't be the shotgun wedding!

LADD:

Of course it won't me. Besides, dunno if we are going to
marry anyway.

BOSS:

You are right- we cannot know that but it's propper thing
to do, understand? Propper or not iti is most likely that
you two will marry.

*LADD drinks to the last drop. BOSS pours more whiskey in his
glass*

LADD:

May I be brutally honest?

BOSS:

What kind of question is that? Of course you may. You must!

LADD:

I am not sure that we will get married.

BOSS:

You don't love my daughter?

LADD:

No. I mean yes but I don't know when we will marry and we don't know is there any wedding in the future.

BOSS laughs

BOSS:

Not sure? I got married thirty years ago and I am still not sure whether I am really married or not.

LADD:

I am not kidding. I really love her but I am not sure.

BOSS:

Having second thought, huh? Yes, I understand: she knows to be a little bit out of control but these things will change. Fancy another one? Is it? Come on, let's talk like man to man. I was once in love with three women at the same time. Luckily they were not in love with me. If it was otherwise I could find myself in a pickle. But, don't say a word about it to my woman, ok?

LADD:

No, it's not that.

BOSS:

She is having second thoughts? Is that little basketball player of hers?

LADD:

If you call the six foot eight giant little then yes.

BOSS:

She was up to her heels for him but this is past. High school past. They broke up two years before you moved here.

LADD:

Moved here, yes. Well, that is the issue.

BOSS:

Come on, drink it up!

ADD drinks up. BOSS drinks up too and then pours another one for both of them

BOSS:

Riiight! Boyxo, you mean the world to me, dig it? You have this wild energy within you, you know, like me in twenties! And you are nice and honest, and these qualities are rare as platinum and needed like plague in this land. Yet, I need someone like you. Someone to lift me up, to show me that life has a meaning. The meaning! Listen, my daughter and you will be OK, you will see. You are just young and afraid of being tied up. I understand.

LADD:

Maybe.

BOSS:

Maybe? For sure! Listen, man comes to knowing, facing his demise...

LADD:

Don't say so. You are only fifty.

BOSS:

I am sixty and yes, I look younger for a whole decade. Listen, point is, one day when I stand before the God he won't ask me: „Did you leave five thousand reservations for

eighty Miramars and twenty Belviews or did you spend three years kissing up rich asses on journeys around the globe or are you the first man in this country who organized tourist trip to Tibet? He won't ask me am I satisfied with this guy over here, financial genius who has increased my income for hundred percent within three years! He swill ask me just oner question: Have you been loved on Earth and did you leave your offsprings behind you? And I wil say: yes, my daughter loves me ,my woman loves me, at least she did during first five years of marriage, later on we were good at tolerating each other and yes, even my son in law loves me.And I have my heirs, I have my only daughter and she gave birth to three good looking, healthy, smart ladds and one day they will run my business. And God will say: You have your peace. May your soul find rest.

BOSS starts to cry. LADD tries to patt him BOSS stops him with moveement of his hand

BOSS:

No, it's ok. If there wasn't booze I wouldn't slober. As I have previosly said: cause of all troubles and answer to all questions.

LADD:

It's not rewsponding to me, though.

BOSS:

That's because you don't drink enoguh .

BOSS pours more whiskey in their glasses. LADD starts laughing

LADD:

Ah that's your plan- getting me drunk and then dragging me
to altar with your daughter?

BOSS:

God forbid! Yet, why not? That's the best way. I do not
recall my wedding.

LADD:

I have the opposite problem.

BOSS:

Which one? You remember your wedding?

LADD laughs. Pause

BOSS:

You are married?

LADD:

Nope. Was once. Just playing, as kids.

BOSS:

Playing, huh? It's good you didn't overact it.

LADD:

When i said i have the opposite problem I meant that I
recall everything from the time when I was three and there
is not alcohol in the world to wash that away from me.

BOSS:

That is because you didn't drink enough

*LADD pulls away the glass. BOSS spills couple of drops on
the floor*

LADD:

What do you know about me?

BOSS:

Pardon?

LADD:

What do you know about me?

BOSS:

Is there anything to know? You are good kid and that's all.

LADD:

Have you ever wondered who am I, where I am from?

BOSS:

Sure. You are from that small place by the border. It goes something like...

LADD:

No, I'm not.

BOSS:

How come? You talk like them.

LADD:

The same accent is appearing on the other side of the border.

BOSS:

Here we are.

LADD:

We haven'T BEGUN YET.

BOSS:

Why sghould we? Is it matter where are we from. We are all people, aren't we?

LADD:

Are we?

Pause

BOSS:

I dislike conversations like this one.

LADD:

I dislike them too but I have to say something.

BOSS:

And you told me. Yopu grew up on the other side and came here. I don't resent that. We are the same folks.

LADD:

How do you mean?

BOSS:

People on this and that side of the border- it's all the same.

LADD:

Some people don't think like you.

BOSS:

Let them be... Why the face?

I am not supposed to be here. I finished the school down there. I got married there. I mean „married!“

BOSS:

What the hell are you talking about?

LADD:

I should have stayed there. I shouldn't run.

BOSS:

Refugee, huh? You don't look that way.

LADD:

You mean, I am not dirty enough?

BOSS:

No, that's not what I meant.

Pause

LADD:

I am the citizen of this country and refugee.

BOSS:

Yeah ,hun. Just finnishin. Of course i can drivde. We are
just talking about something.Yeah.

BOSS sniffs and makes sound with his tonuge

BOSS:

Sorry for my rudeness. Drunken fool. Where are you from?

LADD inhales as if he would say something.Lights off

Scene two

The street. LADD, 18,standing on the street, smoking. He inhales the smoke and than puts the cigarette behind his back and w3atches to the left and to the right as if someone would arrive any moment. He is nervous. If looking from distance it seems that his head is smoking. GIRL aproaches.She is 18 too

GIRL:

Ciao.

LADD:

Ciao. Wanna smoke?

GIRL:

Nah.

LADD looks over her shoulder and then draws her close to him and starts kissing her. She resists at first but slowly gives in

GIRL:

Someone might arrive.

LADD:

So?

GIRL:

They might get the wrong impression-

LADD:

Who will arrive? Whole school knows about us.

GIRL:

Not whole school.

LADD:

Are you ashamed of me?

Pause

GIRL:

Of course not-

LADD:

No? Many are ashamed of me lately.

GIRL:

Not me. I love you. I will marry you.

LADD:

Because I gave you the ring from chocolate Kinder-egg?

GIRL:

Your idea.

LADD:

Seemed so cool back then.

GIRL:

Not now?

LADD:

Nice and twisted. Will you wear it?

GIRL shows him the ring with frown face

GIRL:
Happy now?

LADD tries to hold her but she steps back

GIRL:
What's the magic word?

LADD:
What magic word?

GIRL:
Sorry.

LADD:
Stop it.

GIRL:
It is so hard for you.

LADD:
Nothing is hard for me. The thing is that you want me to
humiliate myself.

GIRL:
The thing is I don't want to see you playing someone you
are not.

LADD:
I love you. I wanna marry you. I kid you not.

GIRL:
When?

LADD:
What about right now?

GIRL:
Right now as right now? Class begins in five minutes.

LADD:
Ok. After the school?

GIRL:

No can do- gotta see my girlfriends.

LADD:

Hen we finnish high school then?

GIRL:

You will go to capital city to study and find another girl.

LADD:

That's because you keep me waiting. Come o'er here.

LADD moves towards her. She steps back. He grabs her and lifts her in the air holding her waist. GIRL is laughing.

They kiss

LADD:

I will search for no one. You are the one. Don't look ast me that way. You know you are the one.

GIRL:

Yes, but...

LADD:

You know I love you, you know there's nothing I wouldn't do for you. You know I can't take my hands of you.

GIRL:

Aha. But that's no love.

LADD:

Who says it isn't? I love you completelly, without fooling.

GIRL:

I know. Im just pulling your leg.

LADD:

You want to hear more sweet words from me, is that it?

GIRL:

Yep.

LADD:

Do you wanna to hear about our weekend in the house of your
parents, down there, on the lake? Do you wanna hear about
the time when we were swimming...

GIRL:

Don't.

LADD:

....and how I kissed your tiny feet and how you pulled me
to you...

GIRL:

Please, stop it.

LADD:

... and how we we're entwined here until the dawn broke...

GIRL:

Stop!

LADD:

Why?

GIRL:

I don't know when will we go to the lake again-

LADD:

You said anytime.

GIRL:

Do you ever look around you?

LADD:

What's it to us?

GIRL:

It's for your people. And mine.

LADD:

Who? Old folks?

GIRL:

No.

LADD:

Politics you mean? What's it to us?

GIRL:

Stop playing fool. The things are boiling up.

LADD:

You told them about me?

GIRL:

In this situation?

LADD:

Yeah, they don't need the stranger in their house, right?

GIRL tries to slap him and then stops and cries. He draws her near. They kiss

LADD:

It's gonna be fine.

GIRL:

Fine? The things were never „fine“ here.

LADD:

What about you and me? We will be fine, won't we?

GIRL:

We will be fine.

Pause

GIRL:

I forgot to tell you- the principal sent me to fetch you.

His office. Now.

LADD:

What does he want?

GIRL:

He didn't say but it has something to do with politics.

LADD:

How do you know?

GIRL:

The principal isn't „yours“.

LADD:

So, the principal is yours?

GIRL:

The principal belongs to no one. The principal is jerk. Be cautious.

LADD:

I will.

GIRL kisses him. He holds her and leaves. Lights off

Scene three

Principal's office: working desk, chairs: one behind and one behind the desk. Picture of angry old man dressed p in uniform that represents the mutant between white operetta dictator outfit plus elegance of British counter admiral

Principal is looking at papers on his desk, scattered around. He is trying to make a system within this chaos

PRINCIPAL:

This one was here, this one wasn't, maybe... Was here, wasn't, maybe... No, no logic in that. He belongs to them but has our name....He looks like one of us too. No, can't be...

Knock on the door, off

PRINCIPAL:

Come in!

LADD enters. PRINCIPAL shows to the chair in front of the
desk

PRINCIPAL:

Sit.

LADD:

No, thanks, sir.

PRINCIPAL:

Offered or treated, it comes to same. Our proverb. How's
your dad?

LADD:

Fine, sir.

PRINCIPAL:

Working in factory as usually, huh?

LADD:

No work. As usually.

PRINCIPAL:

He was a good lad. Your dad, I mean. We were the best
buddies back in army. Did he ever tell you that?

LADD:

A bit.

PRINCIPAL:

We were on the border. Watchtower on the grey rotten
mountain. He was quite handy, providing us all the stuff-
cans, fags, coffee, warm socks. If you want something-
just ask him. He didn't take a penny for the effort. Real
sport! And good soccer player too. I bet he is still good
at it.

LADD:

No. He broke his leg two years ago. Factory accident.

PRINCIPAL:

Is that so? I am sorry. Boyo, do you know the reason why
you are here?

LADD:

No idea, sir.

PRINCIPAL:

You think this is because of your smoking habits but it
isn't. You are here, my lad, because you represent
administrative error.

LADD:

I don't quite follow you, sir.

Principal raises paper from the desk

PRINCIPAL:

Your last name. There are twenty more last names like
yours. Is that clear now?

LADD:

Not at least.

PRINCIPAL:

Let me make myself clear: wrong last names- wrong country.
Call it administrative, logical mistake. Anyway- you are
not supposed to be here. Do you understand now?

LADD:

Where, sir? At school?

Principal rolls up paper and throws it on Ladd

PRINCIPAL:

Are you joking with me? In this country, LADD, in this
country!

LADD:

Where should I go? This is my country.

PRINCIPAL:

Are you mental? Eight guys before you figured it out but you didn't. Swallowed their pride, turned the backs and left without a word. All but you. Ok, one of them, cried but he was always a crybaby. Yet, he figured it out alright!

LADD:

I must be dumb then.

PRINCIPAL:

No, just cocky.

Principal gets up, moves towards him and salaps him. LADD grabs his own cheek. He quivers as he would cry any moment

PRINCIPAL:

I have the honour, as the chief of patriotic staff for this conuty, to give to you and your family the following information: you have 24 hours to leave your flat, and then this town and then this land. An hour ago we have proclaimed the state of emergency. Our fatherlend is at war with your people whzeteher they are on this or that side of the border. Everyone who stays in this country and is considered as subversive element will be arrested.

LADD:

We didn't do anything wrong.

PRINCIPAL:

Your dirty tribe is subversive element, all of you!

LADD:

No it is not. We are not guilty for anything!

PRINCIPAL:

Maybe but we will find something. Even if we don't find anything one thing is certain: we cannot guarantee safety for you or your family. What's wrong? You still don't understand?

PRINCIPAL puts his face few inches from Ladd's

PRINCIPAL:

You are not our neighbours anymore. You are not national minority. You are not even the garbage! You are nothing! I can kill thousand of you and not to be responsible for it. I can kill your pa' and get away with it!"I can rape your ma and go to the pub for the beer afterwards! I can burn you all in your apartment and they will decorate me as national hero!

PRINCIPAL spits Ladd's face

PRINCIPAL:

Come on now, go and bring wonderful news to your parents!

LADD hits him with his fist. PRINCIPAL shuffles, makes move as he will hit him and then stops. He laughs

PRINCIPAL:

Rightly so. I was naive, suggesting them to move you out and nothing else. I mean, it's human: I give you information, without any threat of holocaust, genocide, exodus, whatever. It's all logical, all in place. Your people goes to your people, our people comes here. Fair

trade! All for all. Fool! They told me to do the right thing: kill the vermins or they will come back to cut your throat while you are asleep and I didn't listen to them.

That's for me being a nice guy!

LADD waves his fist

PRINCIPAL:

Do you want me to kill them? Hit me again and they will be dead! I will let you watch us killing them and then I will kill you!

LADD puts his fist down. PRINCIPAL hits him with his forehead. LADD falls on the floor. PRINCIPAL comes to the writing desk and takes the ribbon with three colored banner and puts it on the right sleeve. Then he takes the pistol from the drawer and sticks it in his belt

PRINCIPAL:

Desperate times demand desperate measures! Go to your folks and tell them that I am still in the good mood. If you don't move...

PRINCIPAL approaches and takes gun from his belt. He points it at LADD who tries to move away his head. PRINCIPAL leans towards him and starts pushing him with gun. He does it slowly with great delight

LADD:

Don't , please! Don't!

PRINCIPAL:

Are you leaving now? Huh? Are ya?

LADD:

Yes.

PRINCIPAL:

What are you?= What are you?

LADD:

We will go.

PRINCIPAL:

Wjhat are you? Come on, repeat after me. We are dogs breed.

LADD:

We are dogs breed.

PRINCIPAL:

We are inferior race.

LADD:

We are inferior race.

PRINCIPAL:

We are trash.

LADD:

We are trash.

PRINCIPAL:

We are better off dead.

LADD:

We are better off dead.

PRINCIPAL:

Let me kill you, then.

PRINCIPAL puts his gun in LADD's mouth

PRINCIPAL:

Bang! Heheh! Is that what you want!? Me to kill you and you will suffer no more? No can do! Our Lord teaches us that life is nothing but the valey of suffering and despair and your misery is about to begin! It's no good to leave hell

just like that! You gotta suffer first. We won't be your slaves no more. Our time has come. Come on, scram! Out!

LADD gets up and moves to the door

PRINCIPAL:

Tell to your folks that you don't have a day like all the rest. I want to see your apartment clear weithin three hours. Scram!

LADD leaves. PRINCIPAL comes back to his papers. He is fixing his lothes. Then he pus the gun on the desk. He exhales heavily. Knocking on the door, off

PRINCIPAL:

Enter.

Lights off

Scene four

Tourist agency, presence. LADD and BOSS are both very tipsy. They are sitting on the table. BOSS leans on his shoulder with prottective attitude

LADD:

I ran home. Halfway home , while running the old stone brtidge, it pops out of my mind that it is not me running over the bridge but my spirit. I thoguht, for a second, itvwas all my dream., me running, alive, over the bridge.

The real me takes his last breath on the floor of Principals stinking office. Underneath the dictator's

portrait. You know, it was all unreal, like in the story I read once... Bridge on the Owl River, yes!

BOSS:

Sons of bitches!

LADD:

And then I crossed to „our“ side of town and I notice people staring at me with fear, anxiety. Probably they were noticed about what was happening by those kids. Maybe those from the othjer side looked at me full of hatred...

BOSS.

That's GUARANTEED!

LADD:

...yet I did not notice that. I felt the fear, primordial one, the depest one, the one that freezes the blood in your veins,. The world around me became distorted, caricature-like, it all stank on death.

BOSS:

Poor boy!

LADD:

And then I stopped in front the entrance. Big, ugly, working class building. Tomorrow at this time there will be no one here. It will be even uglier than now. And us, dwellers, will push each other around the common pot filled with cheap food the same way we were chasing for places in crowded elevator. And then it hit me.

BOSS:

You didn't say goodbye to girl.

LADD:

Yeah. There was n otime. I had to save my parents. Each second was counting and I was wasting my time. Stood there, staring at the door painted in flaming red, you know, the same one that British put on their post boxes as I recall.

And I thought- where should I go now? Shall I come back to
svchool and kiss her, tell her that one day the war will
finish and we will be together? Tell her that I will wait
and that we will emigrate together? Lie to her and tell her
that it is war today and armistice tomorrow?

*LADD stands up. He moves forward adn then beckwards and
repeats it faster and faster*

LADD:
One step forward, one step back, one step forward, one step
back... Like a broken toy.

*LADD falls to the floor. He cries. BOSS helps him to get
up and sit on the table.*

LADD:
And then I ran forward.
BOSS:
Smart move. Parents are more important.
LADD:
I ran towearlds because something pulled me that way.
BOSS:
It was love for your family.

LADD:
Maybe. And maybe it was easier that way than making u-
turn.
BOSS:
Anyway, you chose well, kid.
LADD:
Maybe I could have done things another way... But, I hope
she understood.

BOSS:

Did you hear from her afterwards?

LADD:

Tomorrow was war.

Phone rings.

BOSS:

Yeap? It's OK woman? What's the fuss? Nop need for alarm.

I am absolutelly sober! See ya soon!

LADD:

Shall we go?

BOSS:

Let it be. Just one thing bother me: there was armisatice
six years ago and you didn't contact her since

LADD:

I didn't. Dunno why. Guess I was ashamed.

BOSS:

Ashamed? Why?

LADD:

I let her down. I promissed.

BOSS:

You promissed her the impossible thing!

LADD:

I could have explained.

BOSS:

Let her go. I was in love once. I was eighteen. She was
wonderful, little nymph, little godess, and then I
realised, turning twenty, that she was that way just
because I saw her that way. I projected myself, dig it?

Make a time distance and your travels and your love affairs
are not so great.

LADD:

No, it was real.

BOSS:

And my love ain't real?

LADD:

No, i don't say so. Just, I left my better half on the
other bank of the river that day.

BOSS:

Lucky for you that you found your better half on the other
side of the border, huh?

LADD:

Yes. She is amazing.

BOSS:

But you still dream about your little enemy?

LADD:

No. And she is not my enemy.

BOSS:

Sorry. Toothless geting ruthless.

BOSS takes the bottle and looks in it.

BOSS:

There is some of it left. Wanna?

LADD:

Why not?

BOSS pours the whiskey in their glasses. They drink

BOSS:

What happened then?

LADD:

Than I told my parents. They weren't surprised. It was cooking for month. From time to time one of „ours“ will shoot one of „theirs“ and vice verse. Country was divided into small ethnical encalves within ethnical enclaves- they surrounded by us, us surrounded by them, they on one and we on the other baricade. And then silence, deafening, ominous, us acting normal life. Andf then someone gets shot aggain. My folks were relieved with idea of exile. They started to pack like mainacs. It was tidy histeria. Shirts here, dresses there, hygienic things right there, documents on the fourth side, check out if there is enough gas i nthe tank, money is under the mattrace... And then it exploded, about a silly trifle thing. Ma inhrrerited porcelain from Granny who inherited it from her greatgreatgrandmother , Meissen porcealin no less. Pa said it is futile t carry all that china- with bumpy roads like ours. She started to cry. She said that she won't go. Even if we take her capers with us.

BOSS: Women! Sorry.

LADD nods, tiresome. That drink their glasses. Lights off

Scene five

Flat- living room: tables and chairs on the fgloor, things are thrown everywhere. Int seems like the flood came in. Catching his breath, on the left side, sits FATHER. Huge bag with things sticking out of it is by his feet. MOTHER stands in front of him on the opposite side. In the middle oh room is LADD, shocked. MOTHER cries

FATHER:

Enough is enough!

MOTHER:

I provided all and you wanna run and where to? To that
despair over there?

FATHER:

Don't have much time. Are you going with us?

MOTHER:

Are you giving me orders?

FATHER:

I couldn't care less for command. I am asking you, you
wittless woman.

MOTHER:

You used to call me differently way back when.

FATHER:

I will call you the way I want, you stupid bitch!

MOTHER:

Human stain!

FATHER:

Tart!

MOTHER:

LOUSY SCUMBAG!

LADD grabs his own head

LADD:

Shut up!

FATHER:

Did anyone ask you any questions? Button your lip, kiddo!

MOTHER points to her chest

MOTHER:

You cut me in two, right here.

FATHER:

Me? They are guilty but I cut you?

MOTHER:

They didn't do this. They didn't beat me up.- Tzhey didn't
demolish the apartment.

FATHER:

I bought the flat- I destroyed it.

MOTHER:

You could talk to Principal like one man to another...

FATHER:

Hey, looney, do you hear yourself? He wanted to kill ouzr
soon! He put his gun in his mouth!

LADD:

No, he didn't. I overexaggerated .

FATHER:

Stop bulshitting us. Are you coming with us?

LADD:

No. Unless mum is coming with us.

FATHER:

You- zip it! Are you coming?

MOTHER:

You ruined everything.

FATHER:

I created it . I wil destroy it.

MOTHER:

It was mine too.

FATHER:

I won't let them have it. Nothing! Nothing! Not a single
little piece won't fall in hands of those bastards! They

will get just a large pile of trash and splinters from me!

MOTHER:

You are an animal!

FATHER:

They will arrive within few minutes. I ask you for the very last time- are you coming with us or not?

MOTHER:

We talked about it. You promised.

FATHER:

I promised nothing.

MOTHER:

You recall, when we still didn't know what will happen...

FATHER:

I ask you for the very very last time: are you coming with us or I will take you to the car by force?

LADD:

Well, you just go. Ma and i will find a way to survive.

FATHER:

Don't be stupid. We are moving!

MOTHER:

Where to?

FATHER:

Cross the border. Go to our people.

MOTHER:

This is our country.

FATHER:

Really? Don't wanna talk ? OK.

FATHER swiftly grabs his bag, moves to Mother, grabs her hair and then pulls her

FATHER:

C'mon.

LADD:

Let her go!

FATHER:

Shut up kid, it is for your own good too!

*MOTHER is screaming with pain. LADD waves his fist against
the FATHER*

FATHER:

What's the matter? You wanna kill me for them?=Is that
what you want? We will be dead if we don't leave this
building, do you understand?

MOTHER:

You have ruined everything, broke my china...

FATHER takes his hand from her hair. Holds her. He cries

FATHER:

Sorry.

MOTHER:

I can't.

LADD:

I will stay with you.

MOTHER:

Go! With your father! Now!

FATHER:

Where will you go?

MOTHER:

They are not chasing everyone. I will stay with my
relatives.

FATHER:

Like it is gonna change anything.

MOTHER:

I can't go over there. I CAN'T.

FATHER:

I am your husband- do you know what it means?

MOTHER:

I do.

FATHER:

And you will stay anyway?

MOTHER:

Yes!

FATHER:

There is no way to explain the things to you. This flat ain't ours anymore. They will move in someone who is their faithfull servant. And you will bnever see it again.

MOTHER:

I can always walk by and look at our terrace.

FATHER:

And someone elses robes will be on the rope, waving like gthe flag. I will contact you as soon as we cross the border.

FATHER gives her superficial kiss and moves towards the doors. MOTHER hugs LADD, kisses his cheek and gently pulls him away from her

MOTHER:

Don't be afraid. It's only temporary. Go!

LADD:

But mother...

MOTHER:

Just go.

LADD:

Are you coming with us?

MOTHER:

I can't. Maybe later... GO! What are you looking at? Get
lost!

LADD turns and runs away. Lights off

Scene six

*Tourist agency office. BOSS is searching something in the
drawer of his table. LADD is sitting on his desk*

LADD:

And then father and I entered the old car. Pride and joy
of car industry of now our ex country. I recall the smells-
plastic evaporating, melting in the spring heatwave. Smell
of gasoline. Mustard in topsy-turvy sandwiches plastein

see-through bag on the passenger's seat. Father's hands, big as shovels, placed on the steering wheel. Lifeless, pale, for the very first time. Powerless. We drove to the city exit. Thousands of cars joined us, fleeing, followed by music of army orchestras filled with hatred, echoing from the loudspeakers placed on the other bank of the river. This convoy reminded me of the funeral. Moving slowly, silently. Like we buried something bigger than us.

BOSS:

What?

LADD:

Our sense, things that make us human. That's what we were burying. It didn't make sense, not anything we did. We were running from the town where we lived for ages to land attached to us with common origins, to the land that wasn't ours. We didn't feel it that way.

BOSS:

And now is, I suppose, different.

LADD:

i got used to.

BOSS:

You dislike this country?

LADD:

No, I love it of course just i don't feel that i don't belong here or there anymore. Dig that?

BOSS takes the pack of cigarettes from the drawer. He takes one of them from the pack and lights it hastily

LADD:

Your lady forbid you this. So did doctor.

BOSS:

let the doc be! This is just for extreme situations, if i
drink a bit more. I don't smoke, generally.

LADD:

You don't drink either, generally.

BOSS:

Shut up and light one.

*BOSS offers him cigarettes. LADD takes one. BOSS lights
his cigarette*

LADD:

Do you know for the term „ blue rabbitt"? It happens when
you arrive in prison. The day one. Cops chase you through
the crowd of prisoners and prisoners, not guards, hit you
anyplace with anything.

BOSS:

I am familiar with the term,yes.

LADD:

Something very similar happened to dad and me. We were
paassing through small towns, people threw bricks and
stones at us, swearing. They ewwen poured a buckett od shit
on the car in front of us. And, who did that? Boys, twelve,
thirteen years old, not more. You should have seen their
faces, turning ugly with spite. And affirmative laughter of
elders, you should have heard that! And them, elders, weith
famous tricoloras on their arms. Semi-masked into soldiers.
I ko je to radio? I recall one of them, big geezer, tall,
strong, handsome, wide shoulders, black hair, gelled up,
like he was Latin lover. He wore jim suit instedad of
trousers. Instead of shirt thewre was a uniform, from the
waste up. He was hodling the gun in one hand and in

another, the same way you hold your cigarette now, he held his cigarette. He was having the time of his life while he was showing us that he will cut our throats. Like this!

He shows

BOSS:

Horror!

LADD:

And our cars were crawling, not over twenty miles per hour. Crawling and non stopping. We could not stop by the edge of the road and , you know, relief ourselves. So we used bottles, the same ones we used the very same day to drink our last water.

BOSS:

God!

LADD:

Tomorrow morning we approached to the border. And, as it is always with „blue rabbitt“, you end up in the cell after beating. Men- left- women- right side...

BOSS'S phone rings

BOSS:

What now? Yeah ,I drink and I smoke, furthermore! Doc banned it, yeah,yeah. Yeah, you can come and drive me home if you like.

BOSS puts down the phone.

BOSS:

And so it goes. The marriage.

Lights off

Scene seven

The cell. Empty room with gray walls. Shouts of beaten people, drunken singing of guards, glass breaking, off. LADD is quivering. FATHER puts his arms around him

FATHER:

Are you less cold now?

LADD:

It's not the cold that makes me shiver. What are they
doing to him?

FATHER:

You don't wanna know.

LADD:

Stop it! Stop it!

FATHER:

Button your lip!

LADD:

Let him go! Hje is not guilty for anything!

FATHER puts his hand on LAD's mouth

FATHER:

Hush!

*Screams of victim stops, off. FATHER takes his hand from
LADD'S mouth*

LADD:

He died.

FATHER:

Ain't that lucky. And you, what do you want? You want
them to come for us? Don't think about what you hear.

LADD:

What should I think about?

FATHER:

Surviving.

LADD:

How to survive? There is a way?

FATHER:

Shut up. If there is a will there will be the ends. Son,
you gotta be prepared for the worst. Always.

LADD:

What are you talking about?

FATHER:

Just this- life is a bitch. Be prepared.

LADD:

Why are you tellling me that now?

FATHER:

Stop asking questions. Is this ok?

FATHER gives him a rubb on his back

LADD:

It's not cold.

FATHER:

I know, you are scared shitless. I am too. But, that must
not block you.

LADD:

What's with ma? Ever thought of that?

FATHER:

Milion times till now. She is fine. As much as she can be.

LADD:

You left her.

FATHER:

It was her choice and you know it. They won't do her no
harm, don't worry. Listen, whole day I am preparing myself
to tell you and I am wasting your time and mine.

Pause

LADD:

Let me get up then. Tell me man to man, not man to baby
being massaged.

*FATHER stops massaging. They get up. FATHER is limping on
his right leg*

FATHER:

Today, as I was cleaning the yard, I heard the conversation
between two guards. They were talking about us. All of us.

Pause

FATHER:

Anyone who can carry a gun will be killed. The rest of us
can cross the border.

LADD:

You are not fit for fighting. Your leg...

FATHER:

Yeah, that is right.... But, you are in a pickle. Dig that?
When they ask you tomorrow how old are you you tell them
you are fifteen. If you say eighteen or even sixteen- you
are capable to carry a gun. So, how old are you?

LADD:

Eighteen...

FATHER:

Why did you say eighteen?

LADD:

I don't want to be separated from you.

FATHER slaps him

FATHER:

Don't tell me that! Fifteen, when they ask you for your age
you tell them fifteen! You are not much tall and you have

babyface. You could be fifteen. Let's do it again. How old
are you?

LADD:

Eigh... Fifteen.

FATHER:

Again. How old are you

LADD:

Fifteen.

FATHER slaps him

FATHER:

How old?

LADD:

I cannot hear you, I cannot think....

FATHER grabs LADD'S face and pulls him closely

FATHER:

Wanna survive? Wanna? How old are you?

LADD:

Fifteen!

FATHER:

More persuasive!

LADD:

Fifteen!

FATHER:

Louder!

LADD:

Fifteen!

FATHER:

Try it more like teenageer!

LADD:
Fifteen!

FATHER pushes him away from him

FATHER:
You will survive. Maybe.

LADD:
Maybe?

FATHER:
Now we are scared, aren't we? No time to loose. They will
ask you tomorrow. Capiche?

Pause

LADD:
Yes.

FATHER starts fixing LADD'S clothes as if he is a dummy

FATHER:
And don't be so cocky. Bend over, shoulders down. Pout some
hair on your forehead!

LADD:
Like this?

FATHER:
And don't look in their eyes. Don't look in their eyes no
matter what. They will see you are old git. And put some
dust on your face before they summon us. You must ugly and
dirty. No one kills the stinkers- they just chase them
away. Copy that?

LADD:

What about you?

FATHER:

What about me? Haven't I told ya? Men over eighteen yet uncapable for military service will be kept for a while and then they will let us go. Probably dosc will check us out or something.

LADD:

You can hold the gun.

FATHER:

But I can't run. And thios is what counts. I am like little child. Listen, as sooon as they let you go, you just move. Don't wait for me. Understand? Just cross the border and go straight to refugee centre. I will meet you there.

LADD:

When?

FATHER:

Dunno. Couple of days.

FATHER changes his appearance. Now he has body language of a soldier

FATHER:

Boy, how old are you?

LADD:

Fifteen.

FATHER pats his cheek

FATHER:

Good boy!

LADD:

Why are they doing us this?

FATHER:

Why? Have you ever learned our history? They are killing us because they hate us, because they envy us. They were always weaker than us, cowards, slaves, goddamn serfs. They were always on the side of evil forces. We had beauty, bravery, strength. We should have eliminated them when we had the chance.

LADD:

Now you talk like them.

Lights off

Scene eight

The office. BOSS throws the cigarette on the floor and steps on it. He is sitting on his desk. LADD is sitting on his desk. He has sunk deeply in his thoughts

LADD:

And so I found out that my father is lying to me. Telling me the biggest lies. He bit my heart. He never was a good liar, though. We didn't talk much that night. A couple of

words. He didn't speak much because he was ashamed of his words and I was silent because I didn't know what to tell him. Tomorrow nothing happened. Not next day, not the day after that. Few weeks passed. Then one month, two months.

From time to time we'd hear about bitter war between „ours“and „theirs“. Those news were thorough, long, depicting merciless treatment of civilians. Nevertheless, they were exchanging prisoners. Foreigners helped that. They gave up on shooting men, we thought. It was against international law., Yet, women were in separate camps, away from their dearest ones. They had special assignments. Do you know what „joy division“ means? And then we were put in working battalions as they called them, bunches of misfortunates who were picking potatoes and feeding themselves only with soup made of its peels. Dad and I were separated. Different battalions. One day his battalion didn't return from potato field. We waved to each other, like, see you later in the cell and that was it. I didn't cry. Father died for me long time ago. The same day he told me about the plan. I got numb, couldn't feel no pain. Kids and me were packed in two lorries and sent away. They were frightened, vomiting, praying, taking a dump in their pants. One kid was repeating all the time that he will meet his father at last. And then the truck stopped. I saw the rocks on barren hills. Guards made a wide, generous gesture pointing to the hills and said: Kids, I am returning you to your old country. It is on the other side of the hill. If you don't reach the other side when I say sixty I will shoot you. Comprene? And we ran. Exhausted, feeble, we were breaking our bones on that goddamn rocky hill. We Bullets were buzzing over our heads. He didn't shoot to kill, just to prove that he is in charge of our lives and

deaths. Swearing and loud laugh. Those were the last sounds I took from my country. Didn't take no pictures though. I was so petrified I couldn't look over my shoulder. I didn't fear the bullet. I was afraid that I will turn to those guards and run towards them, crying out for my girlfriend, my mother, my father's grave. I could make u-turn, and it would be as much futile as me fleeing.

BOSS:

Futile? You are here and you are alive.

LADD:

I never escaped. I never left anywhere. I am selling trips for distant and exotic destinations and yet I didn't move from here. And even if I go away it will be the same. I am refugee.

BOSS looks in his cigarette pack

BOSS:

No more fags.

He rolls it up and throws it in the corner

BOSS:

Boyo, I can't say anything. I am sorry. You can't imagine how much. I know that our people has always suffered there but when I hear it from someone who is dear to me I just want to take the rifle and shoot those bastards.

LADD:

Like this will solve anything?

BOSS:

I would feel much easier.

LADD:

Killing never makes you feel easier.

Pause

BOSS:

And your mother? What happened to her?

LADD:

Died two years ago. So I've heard.

BOSS:

You didn't hear from her after...

LADD:

No. I blamed her. More preciselly, one half in me was blaming the other one. Later on, I took a look on my other half but it was too late.

BOSS:

What to hell are you talking about?

LADD:

I am talking about the reason whymy mother stayed. She couldn't leave hercity. She couldn't leave her people. She couldnA't leave the tyrant she voted for.

BOSS:

You mean...

LADD:

Yes. Daddy married the girl from another tribe. It wasn't a mortal sin then, you know.

BOSS:

Which means you are...

LADD:

Fifty-fifty. The man who is anywhere is nowhere, says the proverb. I am me. I belong only to the memory of the land

that no longer exists. I don't have any other identity but
this one.

BOSS:

Half-breed?! I can't believe!

LADD:

What?

BOSS:

You never looked to me that way but, on the other hand, you
look like them. Your dad was tall , strong man. But you
look like mum, don't you?

LADD:

Yes but what it has to do with anything?

BOSS:

It has to do with everything. There is a logical approach
to the matter. Eskimos are on the north, for it is cold on
the north, Africans are in Africa where is hot, and we are
on this side of border while they are on the other side of
the border.

LADD:

Is that so? Take me to the border, cut me in the half and
the job is done. Half of corpse belongs to you and half to
another side. Fair trade, huh?

Pause. WOMAN and GIRL enter

WOMAN:

What is happening here?

GIRL:

Why are you looking at each other this way?

BOSS:

Tell'em, kidd. Tel my wife and my daughter who you really
are.

LADD:

I am not the one I seem to be. I am refugee.

GIRL:

What?

BOSS:

Tell them everything. Meet them with your folks.

GIRL:

Folks? I thought you were orphan!

LADD:

My mother doesn't belong to this people.

GIRL:

AN to what people does she belong to?

BOSS:

She belongs to the very same people that was exterminating
our people just six years ago. She voted for the butcher
that was leading them! And kid is her spitten image? Half-
breed, snake in my chest, that's what he is!

BOSS starts breathing heavily. He falls on the floor.

*WOMAN i GIRLrun to him. LADD tries to help him but he
pushes him off.*

BOSS:

I don't need help from those that I was watching over the
rim of the rifle.

GIRL:

Dad, don't exhaust yourself, please!

BOSS:

I am OK. Maybe a bit nausea but OK.

MOTHER:

You waged war against us?

LADD:

No. I was in their concentration camp.

BOSS:

It was mistake. They didn't know that you were one of their own.

LADD:

I am not.

BOSS:

NO? Prove it, then! Why didn't you take the rifle to Avenge your father? Other refugees were returning to fight back but not you. „One crow wouldn't pick eyes of another crow“.

Nice proverb, don't you think?

LADD:

Why fighting? Soldiers from this country weren't much better then those from neighbourhood! As I hear they were even worse!

BOSS:

Traitor!

WOMAN:

Be still. Lean on me. Thaaat's it!

BOSS gets up, helped by his wife and daughter

WOMAN:

Can I fetch you a glass of water?

BOSS:

I want just one thing- get him away from me.

Woman and daughter are putting him on the chair

LADD:

No one will take me away. I will go on my own.

LADD makes move towards the door

WOMAN:

Wait! Why no one asked me?

BOSS:

What?

WOMAN:

My parents are just like his. Mixed marriage.

BOSS:

That's another thing. We didn't wage war against their
nation.

WOMAN:

What if you were?

Pause

GIRL:

Mom...

WOMAN:

I speak now. Listen, kid, we really love you. Even him-
althoguh he is not in the loving mood at the moment. You
have to understand him- he was with volunteers, he went to
your country and fought. He lost his best friends. He was
wounded three times. As for me- he shouldn't go. And, I
might add, your people is same as ours.

LADD:

My people? Your people? What are you talking about?

WOMAN:

All of them in this part of the world. All those nations
killing each other are basically the same. People on botzh
sides of the border are very much alike. They speak the
same language. They eat the same food. Ok, religion is an

issue. But, it isn't problem either. You were baptised in which church?

LADD:

I wasn't. Daddy was an atheist.

WOMAN:

And mother didn't take you to her church?

LADD:

She wanted to but dad didn't allow that.

BOSS:

Dunno where are you aiming at.

WOMAN:

Never new. I suggest that you join our religion and then marry our daughter. You are not interested much in these religious matters anyway, huh?

LADD:

No.

WOMAN:

Then converting yourself isn't much of an effort, no?
Sorry, not converting- finding your religion. I see that you are in love with my daughter and it will be pitty to ruin all that. This way everything will be put in the right place- you will become one of us and your firm will have a new boss and my husband could go to retireement. Thewre is nothing to it- they poor a bit of water over your head, say a few prayers and everything is hunky dory. What do you say?

Pause

BOSS:

He is good boy, even though he is fifty-fifty. I ran out of my line. Sorry, kido. You see, woman, that is not so bad

idea, about baptism and all. We are just correcting the historical injustice- returning him back in the bosom of the faith of his foreafathers. You know it from the history that ancestors of your mother were nothing but our people that were converted by force.

WOMAN:

Forget about your history now. Let him decide. So, what's your opinion?

GIRL:

Asnd what about me? Does anyone care about my opinion?

BOSS:

What do you want? That basketball player to run my business?

GIRL approaches to LADD

GIRL:

No comment. What have I said to you when we started dating?

LADD:

Many things. I don't recall.

GIRL:

I don't like being lied to and manipulated.

LADD:

As if it would change something if I told you the truth?

GIRL:

I t would. I'll never go out with you.

Pause

BOSS:

Wait a minute...

WOMAN:

What are you talking about? Be practical!

GIRL:

No, I don't want to be practical. I know who I am and what I am. I hate his mother's people and, maybe it's wrong, but I can't do it other way. I wanna date someone who is one of my own. Mixed marriages are nothing but trouble all the way.

WOMAN:

Be careful with things that you are about to say!

GIRL puts her arms on LADD'S

GIRL:

Maybe the things that we found out tonight were right ones.
If not so I couldn't say...

WOMAN:

Don't listen to her!

GIRL:

I don't want to live in lie.

WOMAN:

No? Take a look at your father and me! We've been living a lie for more than thirty years!

GIRL:

I am pregnant. You are not the father.

BOSS:

Who is it then? Basketball player?

GIRL:

Basketball player.

Pause. LADD kisses her forehead

LADD:

I am glad that you were sincere. I wish you the best of luck. I hope that one day you will find a place for another nation, not just for yours. If you find a place to love your husband and your child there will be enough room for the whole world. If you want to use it, that is. And to you, my mother-in-law and my father-in-law, I bid you farewell. I am leaving to my homeland.

BOSS:

Homeland? What homeland?

LADD:

The world.

LADD leaves. Family stays, not making a single move. Lights off

THE END

