

AUTHOR'S AGENT

Susan Schulman
A Literary Agency
454 W.44th Street
New York, NY 10036
Tel 212 713-1633
Fax 212 581-8830
Schulman@aol.com

TWIN MARRIAGE

by

Allan Havis

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Allan Havis
6035 Hillpointe Row
La Jolla, CA 92037
858 382-0430
ahavis@ucsd.edu

CHARACTERS

CALIE late 30s, stage and film actress, once lived in Los Angeles
DANIEL late 40s, novelist and professor, married to Calie
VIV Calie's one year older sister, NYC accent, lives in London
MARK Viv's husband, late 40s, financial analyst, multilingual

SETTING

The play is set mostly in Alcala de Henares, a university town just 30 miles outside of Madrid. Calie and Daniel about to occupy academic housing for married families in the newer, sterile campus beyond walking distance to anywhere interesting in the universe. Mark will take photos of Viv and others at various moments throughout the play.

TIME

Several days leading up to & including Thanksgiving weekend, 2010

SCENE ONE

SETTING: A London bedroom.

Viv and Mark sleeping in bed.

Viv is snoring loudly. Mark tosses left and right.

MARK

Schatzie . . .

(MORE SNORING)

Schatzie . darling . . .

(COUGHS LOUDLY. STRONGER VOICE)

You're snoring like an army barracks, my darling *Schatz!*

(MORE SNORING. HE SHAKES HER GENTLY)

My darling, it's time to wake up.

VIV

(HALF-ASLEEP)

What?

MARK

I can't sleep.

VIV

Go read.

MARK

You're snoring, my love.

VIV

(SINKING BACK INTO SLEEP)

What?

MARK

You're snoring, darling.

VIV

Oh.

MARK

Why don't you go into the other room?

VIV

Is it that bad?

MARK

Yes and I've an early business meeting.

VIV

You always wake me in the middle of a nice dream.

MARK

All right. I'll go to the other room.

VIV

Thanks, my *snooky*.

MARK

(AFTER A SILENCE)

You know, the other bed is too small for me.

(VIV RETURNS TO SNORING. MARK STUMBLES
OUT OF BED)

I was reading in the Herald Tribune that there is so much stolen art trafficked in Europe that wealthy socialites are brazenly showing off their illegal Picassos and Renoirs at private parties and organized crime is decorating their offices. Isn't that amazing? Europe has lost its mooring, darling, and it saddens me so. Even the Catholic Church has been caught in this web of unauthorized possessions. And now with Euro failing, the Greek government implosion, Iceland sinking into the ocean after belching volcanic ash, and the radical Islam element everywhere . . . I wonder why are we really here? Can you answer me that? What are we running from?

END OF SCENE

SCENE TWO

SETTING: The apartment in Spain.

Calie enters with light baggage, followed by her husband Daniel.

CALIE

This can't be it, darling.

DANIEL (OFF STAGE)

What?

CALIE

It's the wrong building. We're in student housing.

DANIEL (OFF STAGE)

Not according to the map.

CALIE

Then it's the hospital quarters. Smell the ammonia!

DANIEL

(ENTERS WITH VARIOUS SUITCASES)

Was the door unlocked?

CALIE

Ahuh.

DANIEL

(SETS DOWN BAGS AND TRIES DOOR KEY)

Well it fits. You know there's a large upstairs floor.

CALIE

Daniel!

DANIEL

Oh Christ, Calie . . . take it easy.

CALIE

Five weeks?

DANIEL

It's just a base. We'll be traveling every few days. I promise.

CALIE

(CHECKS DOWNSTAIR'S BATHROOM)

There's no shower or tub!

DANIEL

That must be the second bathroom. The bedrooms are upstairs. It looked just fine on the website. Hey, we'll just take a look and then make love.

(STONE SILENCE FROM HER)

Okay. Why don't we just go out to a restaurant for dinner and then make love?

CALIE

You said it was going to be nice. This is a hell hole. I'm going to cry.

DANIEL

Camille told me it would meet our standards.

CALIE

Who the hell is Camille?

DANIEL

The college liaison. You've talked to her on the phone.

CALIE

Well, she's full of bull. It's not even inside town.

DANIEL

How do you know that?

CALIE

We're in the middle of a frickin' industrial park.

DANIEL

That's the campus, honey - on the high tech side.

CALIE

High Tech? They make truck tires and hub caps here. Smell the rubber.

DANIEL

You wanted to come to Spain.

CALIE

Not as much as you wanted to.

DANIEL

This is our second honeymoon.

CALIE

I know that, Daniel.

(WANDERING)

Do cockroaches fly?

DANIEL

Some do. Most don't.

CALIE

Have a peek. This one looks like the Concorde.

DANIEL

I'll call housekeeping.

CALIE

(FINDS A FEW DISCARDED BOXES AND CLOTHES)

It's a pigsty. No one cleaned up since the Inquisition.

DANIEL

24 hour service.

CALIE

(FINDS A PAIR OF EUROPEAN STYLED CRUTCHES THAT
WRAP AROUND THE FOREARMS)

Oh my God.

(HE SEES WHAT'S GOTTEN TO HER)

DANIEL

I'm sorry, Calie.

(PICKS UP CRUTCHES AND STOWS THEM OUT
OF SIGHT)

CALIE

Why can't we move to a hotel?

DANIEL

Because the apartment came with the grant.

CALIE

So?

DANIEL

We're on a fixed income, Calie. Let's give it a trial one week.

CALIE

My sister can't stay here.

DANIEL

Why the hell not?

CALIE

I couldn't stand the ridicule.

DANIEL

Because she's an elitist?

CALIE

Honey! Look at this place!

DANIEL

You're blowing this so out of proportion.

CALIE

Daniel, this is so Dickensian.

DANIEL

Everything's Dickensian with you. When you met me you thought I was Dickensian.

(PAUSE)

Viv's only staying for a few days before Mark arrives. We'll buy some wall hanging tapestries, art posters . . . candles . . .

CALIE

Can't we check into a hotel until she leaves?

DANIEL

No.

CALIE

Daniel, what if I freak out? What if I have a breakdown?

DANIEL

Calie, give yourself more credit. You've worked in horrendous film studios and dumpy little theatres that had no bathrooms.

CALIE

Working in a dungeon is not the same thing as living in one.

DANIEL

Viv will pick up your spirits. She's so funny.

CALIE

And she's totally manic depressive. *I'm* supposed to make *her* laugh. And Mark has made it worse.

DANIEL

Their marriage is that bad?

CALIE

According to published reports.

DANIEL

I'm serious.

CALIE

So am I.

DANIEL

Have they tried counseling?

CALIE

Of course, it was part of their health plan. And counseling never works unless you confess amazing sexual crimes or you agree to do couple's massage for a year at a luxury time share.

DANIEL

Really?

CALIE

All through our childhood, she depended on me. I am Mary Poppins to her Morticia Addams.

DANIEL

Quite a cast. Now I'm worried.

CALIE

I exaggerate.

DANIEL

I don't think you are.

CALIE

You're right. I'm not exaggerating.

DANIEL

You and Viv have a habit of ignoring me.

CALIE

I won't be ignoring you.

DANIEL

That's what you say now. But you two indulge in a private language.

CALIE

Code words are not a private language.

DANIEL

You like to ignore me.

CALIE

With Viv? Or without her? When?

DANIEL

When you're pissed.

CALIE

When else?

DANIEL

When you've a classic Mulligan family crisis.

CALIE

One crisis every seventy five years. Come on, give me a break.

DANIEL

Yeah, right. And when you get dressed to the nines, you can ignore me.

(PAUSE)

Enough?

CALIE

Enough.

DANIEL

Why not take a Spanish class? English isn't spoken outside of Madrid.

CALIE

Who the fuck left crutches?

(APPROACHES HIM SEDUCTIVELY)

DANIEL

The course is free on campus and you know what they say about immersion studies.

CALIE

I can curse in Spanish. *Vaya al infierno, tu pinga!* Isn't that fucking enough?

DANIEL

No, you'll need some pantomime too.

CALIE

I only pantomime in bed, you asshole.

(THEY KISS)

If we end up staying even three days, you'll owe me big time.

DANIEL

Name your price.

(PAUSE)

I'm serious, Calie.

CALIE

A baby in the next twelve months.

DANIEL

Big price.

CALIE

I think big.

DANIEL

Okay.

CALIE

You mean that?

DANIEL

Yeah. It's part of sex.

CALIE

And you still like sex?

DANIEL

Yes.

END OF SCENE

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SCENE THREE: Two weeks later.
In Calie and Daniel's Spanish apartment.
Another Monday in November.

VIV

Of course my hair looks like shit. Thank you. I heard it from my doorman. The whole day's be a pain in the ass. And I had my hair permed and colored Thursday at Babette's and she charges a fortune. Look! Clumps of hair are falling out like a bitchin' Taiwanese wig.

CALIE

Red or white wine?

VIV

White if it's really chilled. Red if it's expensive.

(PAUSE)

A bird shat on my head just outside the airport. Can you believe it! I stepped out for two minutes for a smoke and bang a surgical strike. I hate bird shit.

CALIE

So do I.

VIV

Felt like a three pound exploding mortar rocket.

CALIE

(CHECKING WITH HER FINGERS)

Looks like you cleaned it thoroughly.

VIV

What's the damn national bird?

CALIE

The stork? The blue heron?

VIV

Storks seem to rule this flipping town. I hope I don't die from fine feathered fecal fever. That's really hard say when you're sober. You say it, Calie.

CALIE

Fine feathered fecal fever.

VIV

Now say it fast five times.

CALIE

(LAUGHING)

The town's known for stork nests atop the roofs and phone poles.

VIV

Guess I'll have to wear a goddamn safari hat for the next five days.

CALIE

You look good in safari hats, Viv. Like Dian Fossey.

VIV

Yeah, just accessorize me with a couple of well hung apes. I'm craving a sweet something awful. You got an éclair or a twinkie?

CALIE

How about cheese and crackers?

VIV

No. Sweet sweet sweet!

Then pick up the goddamn phone when I call. Is that so hard?

CALIE

We travel a lot.

VIV

Cell phones work everywhere in Spain, Calie.

CALIE

I know.

VIV

A good conversation is like holding hands in the rain, dear sister.

CALIE

Very poetic. But I hate the phone.

VIV

In all our conscious years, this you deny me?

CALIE

Take it to a higher court.

VIV

I want to be a vivacious post-modern mother and I want you to root for me!

CALIE

I'll get a bull horn and pom poms.

VIV

Oh, I've got Mark trained to participate. Business travel is now a second priority.

CALIE

He gets it?

VIV

It's either the carrot or the stick. And he knows where I'll shove that stick.

CALIE

I thought he had you trained?

VIV

That was just until we got past the wedding.

(PAUSE)

So why did you chose a suburb of Madrid?

CALIE

Instead of Paris' fifth arrondissement?

VIV

Spain's a beastly country compared to France.

CALIE

This country has beauty.

VIV

Yes, yes, in a primitive, raw, and brutal manner. I can see why *España* lost her former glory. Forget Cervantes and *Man of La Mancha*, lollipop. Spain's so backward it makes Poland look hot. Even well dressed Spaniards seem shocked about the new century. The country which invented the *siesta* is not out to break speeding records. At least the Brits in defeat of their lost empire celebrate their denial in some style.

(PAUSE)

Actually, I love Spain and I love bull fights, but I don't know exactly why. Maybe I just love Hemmingway? Maybe I just love Gertrude Stein. Am I making any sense to you?

(PAUSE)

I have to buy four pairs of high-knee, "whore on the street" leather boots, Calie. And I know what I'm allowed to spend. This is Mission Impossible Week. Everything's unbelievably expensive in London. And I'm craving to buy a pair of professional castanets with an instruction booklet. I need an avocation or else I will die by the end of the year.

(PAUSE)

Do you remember Charo and Xavier Cugat? Boy, am I dating myself? I am Charo to Michael's Cugat – not in age but in mentality. I am the underage sexpot and he is the debonair fart in the tuxedo. Did you know that Buddy Hackett taught Charo English? I read that in a fan mag.

(PAUSE)

Mark's driving me crazy. These days without him will be a piece of heaven. He's obsessing day and night about paralyzing injustices at the office. My Jewish J. Alfred Prufrock. His secretary humiliates him the moment Mark enters. He makes him feel lower than dirt. I never knew there could be this much S and M at Citicorp. I never knew Mark could be this masochistic.

CALIE

Mark doesn't strike me as the office whipping boy.

VIV

Well, he certainly isn't General MacArthur. It's Mark's hidden side. He salivates as soon as he approaches the building. From the first day onward, he signaled his boss to show no mercy. It's as though he has a sign taped to his back which says, "I'm a low status asshole. Kick me." I guess it's the glorious carryover from his family. But he's so much smarter than these supervising pricks from Harvard and Wharton. At least we're out of the country. He loves having a London address.

CALIE

Do you miss your pharmaceutical job?

VIV

Only the big salary.

CALIE

Do you miss Skipper?

VIV

What?

CALIE

Skipper. Your dog. Do you miss him?

VIV

Of course. He's my baby angel.

CALIE

How's he doing?

VIV

I call him Doughboy now. Connie says he put on 6 pounds in the last six weeks, which is like 60 pounds on you. Imagine my terrier in a theatrical fat suit. Skipper can't even fit into his oversized travel carrier. Calie, there's no pet on earth that eats as much as Skipper. He's the canine Orson Wells. His gastric track would astound vets around the world.

(PAUSE)

Don't get me wrong. I'm utterly heartbroken that he's seven thousand miles away from me. I thought we could sneak the little fucker into London through Italy - apparently the E.U. countries can bring their bloody dogs into England without the enforced quarantine. But I would need Mark's sister's Italian passport and Mark bellyached.

CALIE

I thought you and Skipper were inseparable?

VIV

I thought so too. But you know, Skipper's a dog.

CALIE

I don't know why you let James out of your life, all for the love of Mark.

VIV

I'll live with that decision, dear sister. And I don't think you're being fair to Mark.

CALIE

You never explained it James's exit sufficiently.

VIV

That will require a very polished essay. Let's not dwell on James this year. He's a successful architect, building titanium pyramids for reform Jews in the Sunbelt. He'll never marry, he'll never have kids, and he's transformed splendidly into my Platonic ex-lover. The best category of men.

(PAUSE)

Don't you miss acting?

CALIE

You know I do.

VIV

Will you ever go back?

CALIE

We'll see.

VIV

Are you writing?

CALIE

I am.

VIV

Another chic lit magazine piece about telepathy between pets and people?

CALIE

Oh, go jump into a lake.

VIV

What is it this time?

CALIE

A noir fantasy on JonBenet Ramsey set twenty years in the future.

VIV

No one remembers JonBenet Ramsey.

CALIE

That doesn't matter to me.

VIV

You know the real killer?

CALIE

Everyone but the Boulder police knows. Her dad molested her, her mom killed her out of jealousy.

VIV

Don't you have to change the names to avoid a lawsuit?

CALIE

It's a novel and I'm just changing the last name. Set in Atlanta and JonBenet's mom is being haunted by her daughter. So Patsy goes mad and confesses to the crime on Chelsea Handler's cable TV show.

VIV

I envy Chelsea Handler. She's got balls.

CALIE

I hope we get to travel before Mark comes.

VIV

Is Daniel okay with that?

CALIE

Yeah.

VIV

What?

CALIE

I said that's Daniel's plan. Is there something wrong with your hearing?

VIV

And can we get to Avila?

CALIE

Saint Teresa

VIV

I know that I'm her spiritual descendent. I've read all the Teresa books about religious persecution, terror, and crazy God dialogues. What a nutcase. I love missing fingers and gouged eyes and every morbid Catholic relic. I just don't understand why Terersa chose Spain when a gal of her talents could have suffered inside another Latin country with better cooking.

CALIE

Do me a favor, Viv.

VIV

Like Italy.

Viv? CALIE

What? VIV

When you see Daniel avoid this tirade crap, okay? CALIE

Was I on a tirade? VIV

Yes, and you're also hard of hearing. CALIE

Does Daniel have any Spanish blood? VIV

Don't be obtuse. CALIE

My hearing's not *that* bad. I just have trouble with orgasms. VIV

Daniel's honored to get awarded with this Spanish fellowship and he *likes the culture*. CALIE

Does he really like the culture, or is he just saying that shit to you? VIV

He's not like Mark. CALIE

Oh hell, they're both so alike. Both the same age, both married late, both water downed Jews, both ex-New Yorkers . . . both feeling so inadequate about everything. Both well read and well travelled and hopeless with a hammer and nail. Oh, more thing, both fell in love with the multi-talented Mulligan girls. At least the boys picked the right pair of sisters. VIV

Is that a dig on Connie? CALIE

Our sweet baby sister has no concept of irony. VIV

CALIE

Irony is overrated.

VIV

A natural consequence when one ingests too many iron and fiber pills and spent her formative adult years in the wacked-out bible belt. Connie is so fucking Christian.

(PAUSE)

And why did she give herself that awful nickname “Missy”? Sounds like a drooling farm girl right out of Faulkner.

CALIE

She likes reading Faulkner.

VIV

You know I flew back to see Mommy for a week.

CALIE

Did you?

VIV

I can't stand Florida.

CALIE

How was Mommy?

VIV

Cranky. She couldn't hear a word I said. Maybe deafness runs in our genes?

CALIE

I have my hearing in tact.

VIV

And everyone's photos were on the fricken' fridge, everyone and their dogs and birds - you, “Missy”, cousins too, everyone but un-photogenic Mark and me. So I said something ugly to Mommy, and she heard it and I felt so stupid. But I got out my worn wallet photos and plastered them over you and “Missy”, and that made me feel better for the rest of my stay. Am I the perfect bitch?

CALIE

Mommy adores you during your birthday month.

VIV

I'm very unhappy and not one of those fashionable Zoloft depressions you see in Cosmo.

CALIE

I don't read Cosmo.

VIV

Too smutty?

CALIE

I'm trying to evolve.

VIV

Vanity Fair? Red Book? Marie Claire - occasionally for shopping tips?
I am the perfect bitch. Admit it.

CALIE

It does nothing for me to give you the title to the throne.

VIV

Crown me. I'm tough on family, I'm tougher on crime. Don't believe in "three strikes you're out". One's enough. Criminal justice ain't a TV game show. You commit an act of violence or rape, you get hell 50 years in solitary. If you're dumb enough to get caught twice, that's it, asshole! Snip snip. I'd love to be the warden telling off some clown,

(SOUTHERN DIALECT)

"Now now, Johnny boy, we told you not to screw up again."

(MIMES A PAIR OF SCISSORS WITH HER FINGERS)

"So we're going to snip off that little naughty prick – this your Christmas present from the great state of North Carolina. Now kiss your twanger goodbye."

CALIE

Wonderful Jesse Helms voice.

VIV

I love channeling Jesse now that he's really dead.

(PAUSE)

Am I wearing out my welcome? I'm so damn happy to see you, darling. Are you enjoying marriage as much as me?

CALIE

Yes, I like being married.

VIV

I know. Look at the glow on your cheeks!

CALIE

I love Daniel.

VIV

Yes. And I feel that love.

(THEY HUG)

I'm deeply frustrated. I've been too isolated since leaving San Francisco. You're the closest person in my entire life. I need you for my sanity. I have to be more integrated in your world.

CALIE

Mi casa es su casa.

VIV

Yes exactly, *mi casa es su casa*. Doesn't that put us in Mexico?

CALIE

Daniel wants the world to quiet itself and look inward. That's his research and that's his aesthetic. He would prescribe power yoga and early Mozart to one and all.

VIV

What the hell is power yoga? Extension cords and Fedder amps?
What's the full story about his first marriage?

CALIE

What do you need to know?

VIV

Are you sure he doesn't have a child somewhere?

CALIE

Absolutely.

VIV

He was paying child support. I did hear that somewhere.

CALIE

Daniel's ex was a charity "big sister". His ex was helping the "little sister" out while she was going through a needed thyroid procedure.

VIV

So payments have stopped?

CALIE

I don't know. He handles the check books.

VIV

Have you asked him point blank? I'm terribly concerned for you, Calie. Didn't he witness his wife's suicide? No, that's not it.

CALIE

No.

VIV

Daniel allowed her to drive by herself DUI.

CALIE

Why are you being a shit?

VIV

What does that say about character - says the little voice in my head. How are your in-laws?

CALIE

I like his mother. She calls a lot, she sends checks, and we get on very well.

VIV

Look, I'll admit it. Daniel is very nice. Consistently nice. You guys are made for each other.

(PAUSE)

What else? You're sitting on some news. I can tell.

CALIE

How can you tell?

VIV

The way you're carrying your hands.

CALIE

I'm pregnant.

VIV

What?

CALIE

You heard right.

VIV

Are you sure?

CALIE

My period's late and I bought the home testing kit three days ago.

VIV

They sell the kits in Spain?

(COMPLICATED RESPONSE)

That's great, Calie! How delightful! How utterly cool!

CALIE

Daniel doesn't know.

VIV

Why not?

CALIE

I wanted to process the news for a few weeks alone. I know what I'm doing.

VIV

Okay.

CALIE

I want the baby. I really want this to come true. I had a long ambivalence about having kids. I'm not like you. I'm very different. You knew you wanted children before you went to middle school. I thought I could avoid kids forever. But I've changed, Viv.

(PAUSE)

What's so special about the first whisper of pregnancy is not telling anyone. Only the mother knows. You become a mother when you miss your period.

VIV

Well, now I know.

CALIE

But Daniel doesn't know yet. I don't want you to tell anyone.

VIV

I won't.

CALIE

I feel like I'm in touch with a secret society.

VIV

I felt that last year.

CALIE

It's a scary feeling.

VIV

That will change.

CALIE

I know the statistics. .

VIV

Exactly how I felt in Italy. I didn't think I could survive a miscarriage. I was devastated. My soul broken into a million shards.

CALIE

I'm felt so sorry for you.

VIV

I'm over it now.

CALIE

I'm superstitious. You're first pregnancy happened to you in a Latin country. We're almost twins. You say the things I just keep deep inside. We're telepathic. Maybe women our age aren't supposed to give birth. Maybe our bodies are just too tired to carry to term.

VIV

(LIGHTING UP A CIGARETTE)

Look. I got over my miscarriage, Calie, and I will make love every other day to boost Mark's sperm count. I will watch the thermometer and my body calendar. And if that fails this year, we'll go to an expensive fertility clinic and buy a baby in a test tube. Either we can force our bodies to do things or we commission science to do some incredible magic. Darling, we'll both have a baby this year because we are twins.

END OF SCENE

SCENE FOUR

(Later that day)

VIV

According to Popular Mechanics and 25 leading magazine editors, what's the most dubious patent in the last one hundred years?

DANIEL

Velcro?

VIV

Nope.

DANIEL

Clumping kitty litter?

VIV

Nope.

DANIEL

Yellow Post 'Em notes?

VIV

Nope.

DANIEL

Lubricated condoms?

V IV

Nope.

DANIEL

Fly paper?

VIV

Nope.

DANIEL

3-D glasses?

VIV

Nope.

DANIEL

Speed bumps?

VIV

Nope.

DANIEL

Stir natural peanut butter?

VIV

No, sir.

DANIEL

The hula hoop?

VIV

Nope.

DANIEL

Call waiting?

Call waiting wasn't a patent.

VIV

How do you know?

DANIEL

Time's up.

VIV

What's the answer, Viv?

DANIEL

The personal vibrator.

VIV

Okay. I wasn't quite going there.

DANIEL

How's your novel going?

VIV

Five chapters in and rolling nicely.

DANIEL

What's it about?

VIV

DANIEL

About two Italian brothers travelling by train through Europe. Set right after World War II. Much of the story involves Franco Spain and the Jews helped by the Spanish fascists. The brothers fled to Spain just before their extended family was sent to a concentration camp. At the end of my story, the young brother dies after he leaves the train before reaching their final destination in Milan. He leaves behind a young widow.

Nothing like your last book.

VIV

I guess not.

DANIEL

A lot of research?

VIV

DANIEL

Yeah. I began with Primo Levi's memoirs. One Italian Jew escaped the camps by masquerading as a Vatican priest for two years. Spain had a better record of protecting the Jews compared with Italy and France.

VIV

What's the title?

DANIEL

Ghost Train.

VIV

Are you taking pot shots at the Vatican?

DANIEL

Sure. Why not?

VIV

Really, Daniel, every country in Europe had at one time or another kicked out the Jews.

DANIEL

Yes, I know. That's why I'm using a train.

VIV

No one reads novels anymore, Daniel.

DANIEL

You may be right, Viv.

VIV

Doesn't that bug you?

DANIEL

Yeah, of course.

VIV

Does Calie read everything you write?

DANIEL

She does.

VIV

Aren't you lucky?

DANIEL

I am, yes.

VIV

I wish Mark had a creative outlet. He's doesn't have your imagination. He only drinks in the world of business and yet he cannot visit enough museums. He has a photographic memory, second to none. Like a digital processor, he scans all the paintings on the wall. It's not art appreciation. He takes inventory, Daniel.

DANIEL

Yes, I know.

VIV

Do you ever cheat on Calie?

DANIEL

What?

VIV

Even a little bit?

DANIEL

No, Viv. And it's an offensive question.

VIV

I'm sorry. I ask everyone who's married the same question and I just had a strong hunch that's what broke up your first marriage. Stupid me. We should change the subject.

DANIEL

Yes, we should.

VIV

Mark wouldn't cheat. He's not built for deception. And when he lies his face turns beet red. Hubby's so conservative and that is so dreary, but he does so much better when we leave the States. And he gets quite emotional every time we check out of a hotel. I hope we can get into a baby thing soon.

DANIEL

That would be nice. You and Mark, Mommy and Daddy.

VIV

I want to be a mother really soon.

DANIEL

Good luck.

VIV

Do you mean that?

DANIEL

I do.

VIV

I'm glad, Daniel. I always suspected we had a good personal connection. And I wish you and Calie the very same thing.

(SHE GIVES HIM A PECK ON THE CHEEK)

DANIEL

Thank you, Viv.

END OF SCENE

SCENE FIVE

(That night, Calie and Daniel getting ready for bed)

CALIE

I'm exhausted.

(BRUSHING HER HAIR)

DANIEL

Oh, long day?

(FLOSSING TEETH AND WANDERING)

CALIE

Ahuh.

DANIEL

Back massage?

CALIE

Please.

DANIEL

Is Viv comfortable in the spare room?

CALIE

I think so.

She's full of energy.

DANIEL

No surprise there.

CALIE

More so than when she's with Mark. So what's the plan tomorrow?

DANIEL

Take the rent-a-car out of town.

CALIE

Toledo?

DANIEL

Viv wants to go to Avila.

CALIE

Where do you want to go?

DANIEL

I'm easy. Are you okay about taking a day off from the novel?

CALIE

Yeah.

DANIEL

You sure?

CALIE

No problem, Calie. The work's flowing. When are you two going shopping?

DANIEL

The day after tomorrow. Are you done flossing?

(HE SHAKES HEAD NO)

Why not go in the bathroom to floss? I never enjoy watching you.

DANIEL

DANIEL

I like Viv when she's on her own. We don't fall into competitive couple teams fighting in marital roller derby.

CALIE

We'll try to make the visit non-competitive. Mark arrives Wednesday night. We'll have Thanksgiving together and then he has a business meeting in Madrid that Friday.

(SHE CLIMBS INTO BED)

DANIEL

His trip is covered as a business expense?

CALIE

Well, Viv tells me the Madrid office has no reason to see Mark. Maybe it's half fiction. He'll chat up the receptionist and the mail room interns. Then he can write off the flight expense. Viv and I will go to Madrid with him. We'll visit the Prado and he'll meet us there later. You don't have to join us.

DANIEL

Thanks.

CALIE

I told Viv you're keeping to a strict writing schedule.

DANIEL

They still want to have an overnight this Saturday within one hundred miles?

CALIE

Ahuh.

DANIEL

I asked Mark over the phone last week if they had a favorite Hotel Parador. He sounded enthusiastic about Siquenza. He'll be bored after one hour in our humble village Alcala. No problem moving them to the three star hotel in Alcala. Viv's bed is too small.

DANIEL

Why do you look upset?

CALIE

I don't know. Maybe it was something she said to me today.

DANIEL

About being here with us?

CALIE

Not exactly.

DANIEL

What then?

CALIE

Just stuff about guys who marry a second time.

DANIEL

Well, if it's any comfort, she said something like this to me too.

CALIE

Come to bed, Daniel.

DANIEL

(SITS ON THE BED AND FLINGS OFF HIS SOCKS)

She's pissed about something.

CALIE

Not so loud. Viv's next door.

DANIEL

She's already asleep. Can't you hear Godzilla snoring?

(PAUSE_

So what did Viv say about my first marriage?

CALIE

Nothing. Just digging for dirt.

DANIEL

Did she use the word, "tragedy".

CALIE

Not exactly.

DANIEL

I told her to back off from my personal history.

CALIE

I said the same thing to her.

DANIEL

Let's see if she can back off.

(SLIPS UNDER THE COVERS NEXT TO HER)

You drink and smoke when she's around.

CALIE

I smoke to keep her company. I drink to endure her company.

In her first minutes in Spain, a bird shat on Viv's head.

DANIEL

In Romania that's an auspicious omen.

CALIE

Really?

DANIEL

In Bucharest it means she's about to have sex with a new lover.

CALIE

I'll tell her that tomorrow.

DANIEL

Calie, you're in my novel

CALIE

I know.

DANIEL

It's a positive depiction. You're the wife of the younger brother.

CALIE

But I'm not the central character.

DANIEL

That's right.

(KISSES HER)

I love you, darling.

CALIE

I know.

DANIEL

I'll do anything for you.

CALIE

Anything?

DANIEL

Anything.

CALIE

That's the deal, darling. And I'm going to hold you to the promise.

END OF SCENE

SCENE SIX

(Wednesday morning in the apartment.
Calie, Viv and Daniel in anticipation
of Mark's arrival. Viv's putting on high
leather boots.)

VIV

I have to show you what I bought yesterday. Can you guess? It is music and it is Spain!
(TAKES OUT CASTANETS. SPEAKING IN A SPANISH ACCENT)

Professional castanets with the written dirty secrets of the Iberian peninsula's most famous
Flamenco dancer - Carmen Rodriguez del Rio Grande.

(THROWS A COLORFUL SCARF OVER HER NECK)

Stands the lurid test of time.

(BEGINS TO ANIMATE THE CASTANETS SLOWLY)

Me llamo Carmen Rodriguez del Rio Grande.

(CASTANETS PLAY FASTER, AS VIV'S BOOTS TAP OUT)

I am fire, *yo soy fuego!*

(BUILDS IN SPEED AND INTENSITY. COMICALLY, SHE
TURNS HER HANDS INWARD AS THOUGH THE CASTANETS
WERE TWO HAND PUPPETS TALKING TO PUPPETEER. SHE
FACES IN PROFILE EACH PUPPET HAND AND TURNS
TO THE OTHER HAND FOR THE VISUAL GAG. HER
HIPS SHAKE, HER STAMPING HEELS POSSESS HER BODY,
AND HER HAIR IS FLYING IN COMPLETE ABANDON.
CALIE AND DANIEL BREAK INTO LAUGHTER)

CALIE

Brava, Brava!

DANIEL

Utterly brilliant!

VIV

(STILL IN SPANISH ACCENT)

I am not finished, my darlings.

CALIE

It's your alter ego taking over.

VIV

Dios mio!

CALIE

It began in Avila after meeting the ghost of Saint Teresa.

DANIEL

(CHECKS WRISTWATCH)

Want to come with me to the airport for Mark?

CALIE

I lost track of time.

VIV

I don't care.

CALIE

Do you want the company?

DANIEL

I just thought Mark would want to see you all at the gate.

VIV

Screw it. He should have flown with me the other day.

(PAUSE)

It'll give Calie and me a little more time to catch up.

CALIE

Thanks, Daniel.

VIV

By the way, Mark did some research and found a restaurant in Madrid that serves turkey.

DANIEL

Turkey?

VIV

Apparently it was the only legitimate three Michelin star in Spain.

DANIEL

Oh.

VIV

So he made a reservation for Thanksgiving.

CALIE

We'd rather stay in that night.

DANIEL

Calie must cook. She always cooks during holidays.

CALIE

It's impossible to drive to Madrid at night.

DANIEL

Rush hour worse than L.A.

VIV

You know Mark. He did his research.

DANIEL

I'll tell him in the car.

VIV

Daniel?

DANIEL

Yeah?

VIV

Don't speed. It makes Mark nauseous. And he'll throw up in your car.

DANIEL

Thanks.

VIV

You're welcome.

END OF SCENE

SCENE SEVEN

(Later that day. Mark's arrival)

Paul McCartney?
DANIEL

Nope.
MARK

Sophia Loren?
CALIE

Wrong again.
MARK

Larry King?
VIV

Close. Very close, my sugarplum.
MARK

We're scratching.
DANIEL

Tiger Woods.
MARK

Come on!
CALIE

MARK
I swear on my mother's grave. He was two rows ahead sitting next to a girlfriend. He's not that tall up close. He was wearing an oversized baseball cap and he monopolized the bathroom.

DANIEL

I used to like Tiger.

MARK

I still do. He gives a lot of money to philanthropies and he's making a real effort to learn Swedish.

VIV

Are you hungry?

CALIE

Ahuh. Light lunch everyone?

MARK

(HIGH PITCHED, ARCH THEATRICAL VOICE)

My lovely bride must eat before her sugar levels dip perilously. I cannot let my blushing bride suffer.

VIV

Mark, please . . .

MARK

(HIGH VOICE CONTINUED)

My darling bride is more delicate than a rose and equally ephemeral.

(NORMAL VOICE)

It hits her harder in Roman Catholic nations. Something about seeing so many old women in torn black dresses and battle-worn orthopedic shoes.

CALIE

Are you going to buy a flat in London?

VIV

The prices are bloody astronomical.

MARK

That's up to your little sister. A pretty bonus is on its way for yours truly.

VIV

Really?

MARK

I told you, *schatzie*.

VIV

When?

MARK

Right after Christmas. You liked England, didn't you, Calie?

CALIE

We were just there for a week a year ago.

MARK

Well, of course, you must visit us before you go back to the States.

VIV

A promotion bonus?

MARK

Perhaps I forgot to tell you, dearest. I might be made V.P. at this branch.

VIV

We're not staying another year in London, Mark.

MARK

Que sera sera . . .

VIV

That was not the deal.

MARK

I know, yet our options should stay open.

VIV

Why do you look that way?

MARK

It's that look of love. Sergio Mendez and Brazil '66.
(HUMS A SERGIO MENDEZ TUNE)

CALIE

You guys have to come back to California.

VIV

We will. Hubby's just blowing smoke.
(TUSSLES MARK'S HAIR)
One of our building neighbors is a three hundred pound witch.

DANIEL

Fascinating.

VIV

She holds coven sessions weekly and the incense comes right through our walls. They're eating lost Jamaican children.

MARK

British Immigration looks the other way and it reduces national health costs. *C'est ne pas grave.*

CALIE

Mommy called from Connie's house. They're working out their Thanksgiving plans.

DANIEL

Neither your Mom nor Connie can cook.

VIV

Half of America can't cook a can of ravioli.

MARK

That's why your family's overweight.

CALIE

Mom's not overweight, Mark.

MARK

Not clinically, no.

VIV

What are you trying to say?

MARK

Aesthetics. Only Eskimos and Sumo wrestlers should be overweight.

(SILENCE)

It's more stimulating to live on the continent than stateside – for all four of us. Daniel can get a modest teaching post in England next year. He's beginning to get an international reputation. We'll be one happy American family in exile. There's no reason for Calie and Daniel to forfeit a wonderful Anglo-European lifestyle. .

VIV

And you'll find charming neighbors like our Wicca coven.

MARK

Maybe we can all buy into a countryside cottage near Kent? A darling place to raise little tykes, Calie. We can loan you the down payment. My sister's very happy living in a small town just outside Rome.

VIV

Sophie's husband doesn't work.

MARK

So? My brother-in-law's active with the Church.

VIV

Mario's cheating on your sister.

CALIE

Is he?

VIV

All of Rome knew, except Sophie until a month ago.

MARK

No, no, no, no . . . that was just a stupid misunderstanding. Mario's a devout Catholic, freelance journalist, and a high ranking chess player.

VIV

Sophie told me right after it happened. She caught them in the nursery.

MARK

She caught them doing WHAT? Holding hands? Whispering while the baby was sleeping?

CALIE

The babysitter?

(VIV NODS)

Oh God.

VIV

A girl no older than 17 with a hair lip.

MARK

How many Italians can quote Shakespeare as fluently and beautifully as Mario?

DANIEL

It's a provocative question.

MARK

He has impeccable ties to the Vatican and his grandfather fought the Nazis in the Italian underground.

VIV

Mario hired the babysitter.

MARK

So?

VIV

Your sister caught them screwing, Mark.

MARK

My sister embellishes so many things to get your sympathy. Mario was necking with the sitter.

VIV

Honey, Mario lives off Sophie's salary. Why the hell do you defend him?

DANIEL

The Italian Resistance was a weak sister to the French Resistance – you do know that?

MARK

I defend Mario because I like Mario.

DANIEL

The French often rigged church and estate paintings to explosives. And they paintings were hung cockeyed knowing only the Nazis would attempt to straighten the frames.

VIV

(TO MARK)

What's wrong with you?

DANIEL

No other nationality would bother with canvases on the wall. Now that's ingenuity.

MARK

Nothing, *Schatzie*.

DANIEL

Did I mention that I just finished a short book of fairy tales?

VIV

It's your unreality, Mark. I don't get it!

CALIE

Daniel . . .

MARK

Viv, we're being rude.

(TO DANIEL)

What sort of fairy tales?

DANIEL

New fairy tales that teach investments in fluctuating markets.

MARK

Not a bad idea.

VIV

Is there a peculiar odor in the room? It's killing me.

DANIEL

The tenants below cook Indian dishes. It makes us hungry or nauseous depending on the hour.

CALIE

Shall we sit down and have breakfast?

(AWKWARD SILENCE)

Yes? Please?

(THEY ASSEMBLE AROUND A SMALL TABLE)

VIV

You don't give a damn about your sister.

MARK

That's patently untrue, darling. I love her more than my brother.

DANIEL

For example, Sasha the Squirrel who hordes acorns is caught in a severe bear market and has to decide before the first winter snow if she will go hedge or hedge fund.

VIV

(TO MARK)

Why did you wear this shirt today? You know I don't like it on you.

DANIEL

I guess I always wanted to do a kids book.

MARK

You know I love Sophie and Mario. Mario's like a blood brother. Give him some credit, Viv. He called in all his political chits when he arranged for your Mom to meet the Pope last year.

DANIEL

The Pope?

CALIE

(BRINGING A TRAY OF COLD CUTS TO TABLE)

I told you about it.

DANIEL

No you didn't, Calie.

MARK

A year ago, last July. Tuesday, the 22nd. A private audience for twenty people with the Holy See. And your nutty, overweight mother decided not to go.

CALIE

Don't call Mom nutty, Mark.

MARK

I meant eccentric.

VIV

The timing was God awful.

MARK

But she could have met the Pope!

VIV

Christ, the day after I had a miscarriage. In the hospital for 36 hours. What the hell do you expect? Mom couldn't leave my side.

MARK

But she's a devout Catholic.

CALIE

So?

MARK

Your mother has never missed Sunday mass in 30 years.

VIV

(SERVING HERSELF FROM THE TABLE SPREAD)

My mother was worried about me, you ninny.

MARK

We all were.

VIV

She thought you could reschedule the Pope.

MARK

(GRABBING FOOD INDELICATELY)

Reschedule the Pope? How naive is she?

VIV

Besides this was Benedict XVI not John Paul II.

CALIE

Please . . . everyone . . .

MARK

You reschedule the dentist or the hairdresser, but how on earth do you reschedule the Pope?

DANIEL

(EVERYONE STARTS EATING. TO MARK)

You're still Jewish, aren't you?

VIV

I need an aspirin, somebody.

MARK

As Jewish as you, but I've read most of Thomas Merton and the Catholic mystics.

DANIEL

Well, maybe you should have gone in her place to meet the Pontiff?

MARK

I don't think you're getting this at all. I made this happen for *Schatzie's* Mom. Every Catholic in the world would nearly die for the opportunity.

DANIEL

Do you want children, Mark?

CALIE

Viv had a complicated procedure.

MARK

Yes, I understand, Calie. I just thought your Mom would be at ease to go with Mario seeing I was sufficient company for Viv. Many women Viv's age have miscarriages on the first go-around. And the second time all is fine.

(PAUSE)

Look, in hindsight, perhaps it was a bad idea to go to Italy while Viv was pregnant. We should have canceled, but I didn't want to disappoint your Mom. She was planning the trip for a solid year and we were travelling in luxury.

VIV

And you dragged us to dozen museums morning and night. You know my Mom's a diabetic with bad legs.

MARK

Well, the Ufizi was the only late night museum and your mother had a lot of sweet sit downs. We took plenty of cabs. My guilty pleasure, *Schatzie*. I love art and I want to share that love with your family.

(PAUSE)

I've learned my lesson, Viv.

CALIE

Coffee's on the table. The toast is coming.

MARK

And do you, Daniel?

DANIEL

Do I what?

MARK

Want children?

DANIEL

(LOOKS AT CALIE)

Yes. We both do.

MARK

Then nature will just take its course.

DANIEL

Sometimes nature is very capricious.

MARK

And if that's the case, learn from my mistake. Pope Benedict is in Portugal this week at Fátima. You know John Paul credited the Virgin of Fátima for saving his life from an assassination attempt in 1981. According to tradition, the Virgin of Fátima revealed three secrets to the Portuguese children. Only the children had seen her apparition. So many apparitions of the Virgin give fertility to the community.

DANIEL

Are you going to try again?

MARK

Anything that makes Viv happy. And sex does make her happy. With or without a petri dish.

VIV

That's a cute remark.

MARK

C'est facile pour moi.

VIV

Sex makes everyone happy.

CALIE

Shall we talk about recent films?

DANIEL

Good idea. What about that goofy Meryl Streep film as Julia Child?

VIV

She put on weight for that role.

MARK

Sex makes us happy and so does a foreign location.

VIV

So tell us all why we're stuck in London!

CALIE

Do you believe you can post a cooking blog and become a literary sensation overnight?

MARK

(ANSWERING VIV'S PROMPT)

Double the San Francisco salary, plus the fabulous cooked English Breakfast.

Is there anything better than fried toast in the morning? Our children will flourish here, dressed like little lovable Hobbits. Our children will be more intelligent and multilingual. I predict we will all have children soon because time is indeed judging us. And the future of our children's generation is in your DNA and mine, Daniel. In Viv's DNA and Calie's. Life is not that mysterious. And although I bore you often, I am not that uncreative. *C'est vrai, mon ami? Claro que si! Mi amigo querido.*

END OF SCENE

SCENE EIGHT

(Next morning. Calie and Mark are having coffee)

MARK

It's awkward to be using your shower, Calie.

CALIE

No problem.

MARK

The hotel simply ran out of hot water when I got in to shower.

CALIE

It's a small boutique hotel close to campus.

MARK

But it has its charms. My firm confirmed the reservation. They're picking up the bill.

CALIE

That's good.

MARK

Viv loves to sleep late.

CALIE

CALIE

She was like that in high school.

MARK

Now that she's not working, leisure's her new vocation.

(AWKWARD SILENCE)

How did you remember my birthday?

CALIE

Viv prompted me with a whisper.

MARK

It means a lot to me. I don't even get a phone call from my siblings.

CALIE

We're happy you're here.

MARK

Calie, you're such a sweet creature.

(PAUSE)

Are you enjoying your residency?

Yes. CALIE

A lot? MARK

It's a little like Italy without the men pinching my *derriere*. CALIE

And if a man did pinch you here? MARK

I'll speak French to all takers. CALIE

Il tu faut parler espanol ici, mon cheri. Where is Daniel? MARK

He likes to go to the campus library early to for e-mail and Internet. He'll be back soon with fresh bread and fruit. CALIE

And how is your leg? MARK

Not bad. CALIE

You were nearly crippled, weren't you? MARK

No. CALIE

Can you still jog? MARK

No, but I rented a bike for the month. CALIE

So brave of you to come back to Spain, Calie. MARK

Do you think so? CALIE

MARK

I do. The torture you went through. How long were you in the hospital?

CALIE

Nine days. The hospital staff was made up of extremely short nuns.

MARK

Have you been riding horses since the fall?

CALIE

Yes.

MARK

In Spain?

CALIE

No, back home.

MARK

You're such a gorgeous equestrian.

CALIE

You get right back on the horse, Mark. Just like the cliché. Do you ride?

MARK

Just walking trail rides. I'm afraid of the cliché.

CALIE

Ahuh.

MARK

Actually I really don't like horses. It's the way they eliminate and break wind inches in front of your gaping face. I think all mammals should use the latrine. From a distance of 100 yards, a thoroughbred is an exquisite creature. What's taking Viv so long?

CALIE

She'll be right down.

MARK

Will you go back to acting now that . . .

CALIE

I don't know. If we could move out of Orange County and get back to L.A. . . .

MARK

You retired too soon. I loved the shows we've seen on DVD.

CALIE

Thanks.

MARK

It must really hurt to fail, Calie, before you reached your prime.

(TRIES TO SOFTEN THE STATEMENT)

Obviously you sustained a lengthy career for your age.

CALIE

More or less.

MARK

Did your agent drop you?

CALIE

No. Yes. There's no good answer to that question.

(PISSSED)

After a dozen years playing comic ingénues, I got cast too many times as the butch woman wearing a police uniform. Lady cops were my specialty.

MARK

I see.

CALIE

Actually it's more funny than that, but you're not laughing. An actress hits the age of thirty nine and you might as well apply for medicare.

MARK

Every profession has a punishing shelf-life date. Even mine. At least you can stay focused on getting pregnant. That's Viv's game plan. And you do need a talent for fertility. You both share a destiny, don't you think?

CALIE

What's the story about Viv's hearing problem?

MARK

Is it that bad?

CALIE

I think so.

MARK

She and one of her new London friends went to a shooting gallery and a gun went off too close to her left ear.

CALIE
She didn't tell me that.

MARK
Oh?

CALIE
What the hell is she doing at a shooting gallery?

MARK
We all do dumb things.
(AWKWARD SILENCE)
About Thanksgiving plans today . . .

CALIE
It's settled.

MARK
But Calie . . .

CALIE
Yesterday I went shopping to cook a great dinner.

MARK
But you're not cooking a turkey.

CALIE
Cornish hens. That's close enough.

MARK
I busted my hump getting to this restaurant, Calie . . .

CALIE
Daniel doesn't want to *shlep* to Madrid for a 10PM holiday dinner. It's a killer drive at that hour in both directions.

MARK
We can take a cab in.

CALIE
Mark, it's settled. There's no reason to eat turkey when the damn holiday is American. Now I know you had your heart set on this but we'll go to the city tomorrow. OK, my dear brother-in-law?

MARK
They already bought the bird for us. An 18 pounder.

CALIE

I hate holiday dinners in restaurants.

MARK

And I feel like a jerk for prepping this restaurant.

CALIE

Just let it drop. We'll reimburse them for the turkey.

MARK

Sure. Fine. Whatever.

CALIE

You're making me very uncomfortable.

MARK

Forget I brought it up. Silly me. They can resuscitate the fucking turkey for another holiday.

(PAUSE)

You know, Calie, one day your Mom will have to choose a daughter to live with since she's getting kind of frail. Now, if she chooses Connie – which is thoroughly insane – there might be some peace between you and Viv. But in all likelihood, it will be a contest between you and Viv. I've talked to Viv a lot about this and she's really hoping you let her get her way. Maybe this is a stupid time to ask you this, and maybe there's never a good time to bring this up, but you and Danny really don't have the finances to make your Mom comfortable.

END OF SCENE

SCENE NINE

(Daniel, Viv, and Mark are at table as Calie is off stage preparing Turkey dinner)

VIV

I'm still so stuffed from our late lunch.

MARK

I misjudged things too quickly. Alcalá is a charming town with a restaurant you can be proud of.

DANIEL

The true birthplace of Cervantes.

MARK

Yes, you've said that several times today.

VIV

(LOUDLY TO CALIE)

Calie, why don't you sit down and drink with us?

CALIE (OFF STAGE)

I want to start dinner before it gets too late.

MARK

(TO CALIE)

Dear Calie, we don't need to eat now. Come play with us.

DANIEL

Forgive me for saying this, but Calie thinks you work for the CIA. It's a running joke between us.

MARK

The CIA?

DANIEL

Fluent in six languages.

MARK

Seven. Greek.

DANIEL

That's amazing.

CALIE

(ENTERS BRIEFLY WITH A TRAY OF SNACKS)

Yeah, Connie and I joke about it a lot. No one knows the accounts you work on at Citicorp and you travel alone all the time.

DANIEL

All your business suits are dark blues or solid black. You accessorize with the ugliest sunglasses too.

CALIE

You explain a lot of your disappearances to trips to museums in foreign cities.

(SHE EXITS)

DANIEL

You veil everything that is biographic.

MARK

Discretion is not a sin, Danny.

DANIEL

You've no close friends.

MARK

Well, in truth I have practically no friends – if you really wish to profile me.

DANIEL

You're parents are deceased.

MARK

What has that to do with things? Do you think I murdered my folks?

DANIEL

Well if you had murdered them, that would clinch the theory. And except for Viv, you're always in shadow.. What government spies require. A perfect spook.

MARK

Spies require decoder rings, fishnet stocking whores, and high production BMWs. I'm only guilty of the BMWs in my life.

(LOUDLY)

Do you really think I'm a spy, Calie? Or is this for Daniel's amusement?

CALIE (OFF STAGE)

Yes. I think you're a spy.

MARK

(CROSSING TO THE DOORWAY)

Are you sure?

VIV

If Mark is a secret agent, he's no more dangerous than Austin Powers, *baby!*

(POURING A SECOND GLASS OF WINE FOR HERSELF)

Really, Calie. I don't think anyone's hungry for another big meal today. Sit with us!

DANIEL

Calie knocked herself shopping for this meal.

MARK

We just need a few crackers and cheese to tide us over.

DANIEL

I would like a dinner at home.

MARK

Some of us have to watch our weight, Danny.

DANIEL

Please don't call me, Danny.

VIV

(EXCUSING HERSELF UPON EXITING)

I'm going to have a word with Calie.

DANIEL

Do me a favor, Mark.

MARK

What?

DANIEL

When you talk to Calie, don't keep mentioning the horse riding accident. It's getting old and I'm tired of hearing it.

MARK

I'm very sorry.

(PAUSE)

You don't like me, do you?

DANIEL

I don't know. I used to like you.

MARK

Because of the crap that went on yesterday?

DANIEL

No.

MARK

We should have gone to Madrid for dinner. No fuss, no muss. You took the fun out of the evening, Daniel. I already paid for the turkey they bought. And I paid for a very decent lunch.

DANIEL

It's a bigger issue than Thanksgiving.

MARK

Is it about the Pope?

No. DANIEL

Are you sure? MARK

I like the Pope. It's not about the Pope. DANIEL

Is it a money thing? MARK

No. DANIEL

Academics are always chafing about money. MARK

I'm not an academic. DANIEL

MARK
That's right. You're an emerging novelist with a select readership who teaches college composition. We're obviously in two different tax brackets. And you made some bad stock investments last year. My twelve year nephew placed better portfolios. Yes, you have tenure and a chance for sabbaticals every leap year.

What the hell do you have? DANIEL

A Yale MBA. MARK

This is turning into a barnyard pissing contest. DANIEL

Maybe you're pissing on your own leg. MARK

Yes, what neurotic academics do best. DANIEL

MARK
I never inferred you're neurotic. I like you Daniel and I actually envy you. You allow yourself a fictional world for hours at a time - high in your ivory tower. You can rummage through your

fantasy. You've an upholstered womb with adoring students at your feet, while I'm in an airless cubicle crunching numbers for millionaire clients. You and I used to argue about classical composers, left wing politics, and new ways on defining libertarianism after 9/11. We really need to go back to that playlist, don't you think?

DANIEL

Everyone's neurotic, Mark, so why back peddle?
(VIV RE-ENTERS, NOTICING THE TENSION)

VIV

Are you boys playing nice?

DANIEL

Yes.

MARK

Daniel, are you still smarting from your first marriage?

VIV

Schatzie . . .

MARK

You've guts to marry again and you make Calie feel loved.

VIV

Calie's a lucky gal.

MARK

Viv, you girls are in a race about conception.

VIV

There's no contest.

MARK

I keep telling Viv that she must come with me to Peru to rub the belly of the black Madonna. All the indigenous women make the pilgrimage for this Andes fertility rite. It really works. You can't underestimate the power of suggestion at these incredible altitudes.

(PAUSE)

I've read your last two novels, Daniel. You are changing . . . as a writer and as a person. I think you're finally showing empathy to your rich villains where in the past you were just serving your political agenda.

DANIEL

Is that a compliment?

MARK

Yes. A big one. And I couldn't do what you do. I am too biased and I don't have patience for stupid people. We have a lot in common even if we are polar opposites. My sense is that you too have reservations about becoming a father. You don't have to admit it and I hope you allow me some solidarity with you.

(TO VIV)

We're playing a twin marriage.

VIV

What does that mean?

MARK

It means we are symbiotic. It means we inhabit some unwritten contract to be satellites of each other. If we were architecture, we would be attached townhouses with a common bearing wall. If we were a constellation, our theme would be symmetry. Maybe I drank too much wine today and this will be my great undoing. I hated my father. Had he died ten years earlier, I would be that much happier today. I have a twin brother whom I never see anymore. But I grew up always conscious of my twin. I think you and Calie are virtual twins. The four of us got married within a year. It's a coincidence to be in Europe at the same time and to plan for the next phase of marriage. Is this a good thing or a bad thing? This synchronicity?

(CALIE ENTERS WITH A TRAY OF FOOD)

DANIEL

It's a temporary thing, Mark. Which is a good thing.

MARK

I hope the novel that you're writing surprises you, Daniel. I hope the novel frees you. And I hope I'll become your friend one day, despite all the tactless things falling out of my fat mouth.

(STANDING UP)

I really have no appetite tonight. Are you hungry?

VIV

No.

MARK

Well then, you two can eat and we'll just have some coffee and fruit.

CALIE

What?

DANIEL

Please sit down, Mark. Calie really knocked herself out with this meal.

CALIE

Viv?

VIV

I guess Mark's not hungry and I got to watch my weight.

MARK

Why don't we just go to our hotel room and get some rest? We're all a little tired and any more wine will be lethal. This is a Thanksgiving to remember.

END OF SCENE

SCENE TEN

(Next day, Mark and Daniel are alone)

DANIEL

I can't go with you to Madrid, Mark. I've got to keep pace with this book.

MARK

I just thought to ask.

DANIEL

I'll meet up with you all tonight either for dinner or for drinks.

MARK

Fine. Again, really sorry about last night.

DANIEL

Regarding the conversation?

MARK

More to the point. Calie's home cooking.

DANIEL

No problem. We'll be eating leftovers for a few days.

MARK

(LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW)

Looks like it might snow. Not much of a view.

DANIEL

No. We're in a cluster of buildings.

MARK

Too bad the other apartments got the courtyard.

DANIEL

Yeah.

MARK

I see the ladies are sharing a cigarette.

DANIEL

Actually, Calie has quit.

MARK

Has she?

DANIEL

Hypnosis.

MARK

She told me, yes. Hocus pocus. Keeps you in check for about 72 hours.

(PAUSE)

Sharing a cigarette probably brings back their high school days sneaking a smoke in the bathroom. I love the Philip Morris tobacco study for the Czech Republic, saying the government would gain financially from premature smoker death. The Czechs found it a compelling sales point.

DANIEL

Smoking is very Spanish.

MARK

Viv and I made a deal a week before our wedding. She would stop smoking and I would shave off my moustache. I kept my end but she reneged on her promise. There's a French film which came out five years ago called *La Moustache*. A husband shaves off his lifelong moustache and his wife fails to notice anything different. It is a version of my life, Daniel. You must rent the DVD.

DANIEL

Viv tells me that your immediate supervisor is a cross-dresser.

MARK

To each his own.

DANIEL

Does your firm have a Casual Friday dress code?

MARK

No, but my boss Stefano has a completely different wardrobe at home and he's loved by everyone.

DANIEL

And you discovered his little secret over dinner?

MARK

It's too long a story to relay. He's very large boned and hairy. J. Edgar Hoover enjoyed wearing elegant silk dresses.

DANIEL

Are you FBI and not CIA?

MARK

MARK

Actually I'm INTERPOL.

DANIEL

Jan Morris, who wrote that exceptional travel book on Spain, had a trans-sexual operation.

MARK

Yes, I did know that.

DANIEL

Whom are you meeting at the Madrid office?

MARK

A regional analyst who covers steel production.

(PAUSE)

Despite all the recent hardships in Europe, I truly think this continent is the only place to live. I've felt this all during my adult life. It's the pace and quality of living that simply defies Wal-Mart, South Park, and Superbowl Sundays.

DANIEL

For a professional traveler such as yourself, you don't risk suffering the Stendhal Syndrome.

MARK

Stendhal Syndrome?

DANIEL

Confusion, fatigue, dizziness, and feeling overwhelmed by powerful beauty during times of travel.

MARK

Not me. Is that you?

DANIEL

I can get that way during writer's block but not in the pleasure of travelling.

MARK

I like your honesty, Daniel.

DANIEL

Thank you.

MARK

It's good that we share a way to look at these sisters we've married. We validate each other when the girls get a little weird. And they do get weird. We can give each other moral support.

(PAUSE)

How good is your Spanish?

DANIEL

Conversational. I get by.

MARK

All dialogue should be in the present tense. What is your novel about?

DANIEL

Two brothers trying to survive during World War II.

MARK

That's a new subject for you..

DANIEL

I know.

MARK

And your theme?

DANIEL

That there's a parallel universe and it becomes apparent when evil actions emerge.

MARK

I couldn't get through the book you gave us. But I wanted to finish the book. I envy your love of teaching.

DANIEL

Teaching feeds the writing.

MARK

That's how it should be.

DANIEL

Mark, do you ever get depressed?

MARK

My brother's bipolar. Things could be worse for me. Why do you ask? Are you going through depression?

DANIEL

No. Isn't time for you to be catching the train to Madrid?

MARK

You're right. My things are already packed.

(GETS HIS OVERNIGHT BAG)

So brave of you and Calie to return this country.

DANIEL

Why are you saying this?

MARK

After your disastrous honeymoon in San Sebastian and the fall from the horse

DANIEL

The horse dropped and rolled. She almost died. Calie knows how to ride expertly.

MARK

And your horse didn't trip?

DANIEL

No.

MARK

What is it about your wives and vehicular accidents? That's a tasteless joke and I apologize.

(PAUSE)

How is your law suit? Who's your attorney?

DANIEL

A woman in San Sebastian. She was recommended by the U.S. Embassy.

MARK

I didn't know our Embassy made referrals.

DANIEL

Normally they don't, but I made friends with a clerk. Doesn't extended travel strain your marriage?

MARK

Viv loves to travel.

DANIEL

Calie misses Viv. They both belong back in California.

MARK

Do you really think that's true?

DANIEL

When sisters are best friends, how do you go against nature?

MARK

You know my brother wasn't at my wedding. Together we're like a perverse Diane Arbus photo. We can't stand each other. My brother's a madman with a license to practice medicine which is like 007 with a license to kill. He sued the Cleveland public hospital and the court threw out the case. He's become ultra-religious, knocking on doors for Jewish charities. He can run circles around Jehovah Witnesses. Our father gave him all the attention for reasons I cannot fathom and probably cannot forgive either.

(BANGS ON THE WINDOW TO SIGNAL THE WOMEN)

Let's go, Viv!

(HE SEES THEM ACKNOWLEDGE HIS PROMPT)

I have to say, Daniel, that the miscarriage story was . . . seriously slanted. I was deeply upset and I felt useless our entire time in Italy. I am a sensitive man. I want a child very badly and I'd make a better father than the one I had. If we have a boy, there are some issues between Viv and me. Circumcision, for example. Viv thinks it's incomprehensibly barbaric. In Europe today, boys are getting a pass. In America, 50% get cut. So how does a Jewish guy argue this to an ex-Catholic woman? If I say it's a hygiene concern, Viv laughs. Dare I call it a *bris*?

DANIEL

Well, you had a rabbi marry you.

MARK

Ah yes. The Silver Fox from Berkeley. A hip, defrocked rabbi who did not come cheap.

(HEADS FOR THE DOOR)

DANIEL

What about religion for the child?

MARK

A free market Jew. What else? My kid can build a hedge fund against a punishing deity.

DANIEL

Calie and Viv have rebelled alike about religion.

MARK

Maybe they feed each other's post-ecumenical views.

(AFTER A QUICK HUG WITH DANIEL)

I never said *Kaddish* for my mother or father. I suppose I'm going to hell orphan that I am. I know you went to *schul* after your father died. So I guess you get a gold star in your column. Good seeing you, Daniel.

END OF SCENE

SCENE ELEVEN

(At the same time as the previous scene,
Viv and Calie are outside smoking)

VIV

I'm really sorry. Mark and I were not in a good way last night. We were rude. We were atrocious. I understand how you feel. I don't seem very healthy about a lot of things lately.

CALIE

I wanted a family meal, that was all, and I don't know why it all had to fall apart.

VIV

We'll have fun in Madrid today. I promise, Calie.

CALIE

I don't trust you when you cater to Mark. Or when he caters to you.

VIV

You think he's the biggest jerk I ever took to bed.

CALIE

Don't get me started.

Go ahead. Say it.

VIV

I won't.

CALIE

Say it.

VIV

You could have married James.

CALIE

He never asked me and could never ask anyone to marry.

VIV

He was on the verge of asking. You never dropped any hints.

CALIE

You're so off base, sister. At any rate, I'm uncomfortable with architects. They're anal and lack spontaneity.

VIV

And Mark is spontaneous?

CALIE

No, but he is anal.

VIV

You were madly in love with James. You didn't want to be away from San Francisco. And you still miss your dog. You love your terrier more than your husband.

CALIE

How do you prove that scientifically?

VIV

Read your diary entries.

CALIE

Have you read my diary?
(PAUSE)
I'm totally dedicated to Mark.

VIV

So what are the decisions ahead?

CALIE

VIV

There are none.

CALIE

It's not like you to avoid things.

VIV

We're having a rough time. They treat him like an idiot at work. Stefano, his ball-busting supervisor, is half his age and dresses in dresses at home. Mark plays back every injury like a radio sportscaster. Perversely, my husband thrives on self-inflicting details. He only sees the small picture.

(PAUSE)

I know - to you and others - he's terribly insulting but that's how he processes this abuse. He passes it on like a bad penny.

CALIE

Did you marry a psychopath?

VIV

No, a psychopath never bores you.

(PAUSE)

So sometimes my life feels out of control and I've no idea how we ended up in London. I miss my San Francisco friends. I miss Mom. I miss my Pacific Heights apartment. I miss my high paying work. I know what the firm is doing to Mark. Obviously, they don't respect him and only threw him a bone to avoid a wrongful termination lawsuit. It would help if he were black or Hispanic or a lesbian with Parkinson's Disease, but he's just a 48 year old Jewish *schmuck*.

CALIE

Why did you marry him?

VIV

His legs. His long, slender beautiful shanks. And he really did chase me until I said yes. Calie, Mark's often very sweet and endearing when we're alone. You never get to see that side of him. I'll do anything to get pregnant, Calie. Toss my fate to test tube fertility, whatever it takes. I won't have to go back to work for years. You know how long this has obsessed me.

CALIE

And Mark?

VIV

He'll get with the program. He has no choice.

CALIE

Are you so sure?

VIV

Now don't be so negative, I'm not challenging you about Daniel.

CALIE

Go ahead. You're changing identities. It's due to Mark. I swear that you are. Every other thing becomes an argument. You're poised to bite everyone's head off. That's Mark's insidious behavior seeping into you.

VIV

I'm just feeling nervous. You go through this all the time.

CALIE\

Not this bad.

VIV

I'm trying to quit cigarettes and booze.

CALIE

I quit through hypnosis.

VIV

Yeah, I see how well you quit.

(PAUSE)

Look, Mark's far from ideal and maybe we're not really suited for an entire lifetime. Having a child is a wonderful consolation prize, all things considered. Maybe he'll become a terrific daddy. He swears he'll be unlike his father.

CALIE

Then Mark should try therapy.

VIV

You mean, should therapy should try Mark?

CALIE

Daniel swears by it.

(VIV MAKES A FACE)

Nothing came easy to Daniel.

VIV

I have to tell you something, Calie. There were more complications in Italy during my D & C. I've been lying to you and to the family. The operation left severe scarring to my uterus.

All the doctors I've consulted say it's easier sending a manned rocket to Mar than getting me pregnant. The odds are that bad. Mark's not processing this at all - what little he knows. I'm ashamed to admit this, but there it is. I feel victimized by the worst luck ever.

(SILENCE)

Please say something.

CALIE

I'm stunned.

VIV

We'll keep trying as long as Mark's health insurance will cover the fertility clinics.

CALIE

Of course.

VIV

I wish he understood the pain this has become. So there it is.

CALIE

You can adopt.

VIV

No way. I hate the notion. I don't want to raise another person's brat.

CALIE

CALIE

It's about parenting, not birthing, Viv.

VIV

It's about my identity and my damn DNA, Calie, and nothing less.

CALIE

I'm sorry.

VIV

Enough said. Keep it a secret. I'm neurotic and vain.

(CALIE NODS SOFTLY)

And what sort of father will Daniel be?

CALIE

A decent one, I think.

VIV

You never know.

CALIE

He loves animals. Daniel would lay down his life for a wounded dog.

We were at a Parador two weeks ago in Alarcon. I told you?

VIV

No.

CALIE

About the holy dog?

(PAUSE)

At a castle hotel 100 miles east of Madrid. In the parking lot were a few loose dogs with collars. They dominated the pack. The nights were extremely cold. One animal struck us in the most profound way. The one dog without a collar. A lame thing half greyhound, half dingo. We fed all the animals, but there was something about the motley dingo. He was so undernourished, so Christlike. His large eyes were desperate.

(PAUSE)

We went out late again that night to look for the dog. He was the only one left. The others apparently had homes. Daniel named him the Holy Dog of Alarcon.

(PAUSE)

If only the Parador would care for this dingo. Allow the dog to sleep in the tool shed. Not the hotel's burden. We knew the dog was under a year and wouldn't survive the winter.

(PAUSE)

So we smuggled more food from the dining room. We thought seriously about taking him back to the States.

(PAUSE)

I lost my marbles that night. Daniel knew it. He promised to find the dog a home before we left Alarcon. He made it an imperative. We found the dog a home at the barber shop. And I trust Daniel to always do the right thing.

END OF SCENE**SCENE TWELVE**

(Friday night. Viv and Daniel are drinking wine in the apartment kitchen. Calie is taking a bath upstairs. Mark is at the payphones in the residential lobby)

DANIEL

(LOOKING OUT WINDOW)

That's not a chick car.

VIV

No?

DANIEL

BMW Z3 is a chick car.

VIV

Miata's a chick car.

DANIEL

Mercedes roadster is a chick car.

VIV

The Boxter is a chick car.

DANIEL

I don't know.

VIV

Chicks love to drive red Boxters. I've seen dozens back in California.

DANIEL

But a Vette is a boy toy.

VIV

And a Ferrari is the ultimate toy.

DANIEL

You know your cars, Viv.

VIV

I didn't know you like to smoke.

DANIEL

Once in a blue moon.

VIV

Blue tonight?

DANIEL

Looks blue to me.

VIV

Is Calie going to come down after her bath?

DANIEL
DANIEL

I don't think so. She's exhausted.

VIV

I'm sorry you're upset.

DANIEL

Thanks.

VIV

Want to talk about it?

DANIEL

No. How was the Prado?

VIV

Too big, too crowded, more Goyas than I need to see, and my feet are killing me. I don't need to another museum for 20 years.

DANIEL

Tell it to Mark.

VIV

I know what's eating you. I'm like Calie's twin.

DANIEL

Who's really older?

VIV

I am.

DANIEL

You don't look anything like each other.

VIV

Late into the night we do if you dare look hard enough.

(PAUSE)

Can we get back to the real subject?

DANIEL

If you insist.

VIV

How did it happen?

DANIEL

Accidents just happen.
(DRINKS LIBERALLY)

VIV

I told you my accidents with James. You can reciprocate.

DANIEL

She was driving a Chevy Suburban, the hideously oversized SUV, somewhere along Malibu after a visit to a friend's party.

VIV

You weren't with her?

DANIEL

I wasn't invited.

(PAUSE)

We were separated for a few months. She was on a drinking binge and nothing could stop her

(PAUSE)

According to the police report, the SUV crossed the double yellow lines and drilled right into a delivery truck. She flipped and rolled off the road.

VIV

How awful, Daniel.

DANIEL

She was pregnant.

VIV

I didn't know.

DANIEL

Neither does Calie.

VIV

It wasn't meant to be.

DANIEL

DANIEL

I'll say. I blame myself. DMV took her license away. But I knew she was driving at all hours. The car was in both our names. I should have garaged it and taken the plates.

VIV

She'd have borrowed a friend's car.

God only knows.

DANIEL

I believe you.

VIV

Calie came into my life not a moment too soon.

DANIEL

So Calie doesn't know everything? I suppose that it's better that way, Daniel. You'll make an interesting father.

VIV

When Calie ever gets pregnant.

DANIEL

Fertility is a state of mind.

VIV

I don't share your sense of irony.

DANIEL

In vino veritas.

VIV

Or *in vitro*?

DANIEL

(PAUSE)

How about doing a small favor for me?

VIV

Sure.

DANIEL

A watercolor of Skippy.

VIV

A watercolor?

DANIEL

Ahuh. Whimsical and true.

VIV

DANIEL

Why the hell did you name him Skippy?

VIV

Because as a puppy he loved peanut butter out of the jar. Paint us a watercolor, Daniel.

DANIEL

No.

VIV

Oh, come on. It takes you five minutes. I brought a snapshot for you to work from. Do it while you're high. Please, please, pretty please.

DANIEL

I'll do it tomorrow.

VIV

Thanks, Daniel.

DANIEL

I still dread this weekend together.

VIV

Chill, Daniel. Mark feels guilty for ruining your Thanksgiving. His entire family history is ruinous and dysfunctional. You know he was ROTC in college. That's how he paid his way. His father would only pay for his twin.

DANIEL

Come on.

VIV

It's true. His family gave him no support. He's a lone wolf.

(PAUSE)

He wanted us to try that Madrid restaurant yesterday. He put all his pride in selecting a prestigious establishment that would could a turkey.

DANIEL

Hard to believe this all comes down to a turkey dinner.

VIV

Mark needs to feel he's in control. Believe me, you haven't really seen him when he's lost all his control. And you have so many advantages in life, Daniel, to give something up to Mark before the weekend is gone.

END OF SCENE

SCENE THIRTEEN

(150 miles outside of Madrid.
Parador Siquenza's grand dining room.
At the corner table sit the two couples
holding up menus)

VIV

We've a later flight tomorrow so we can walk around Siquenza.

CALIE

Did you confirm with the airlines?

MARK

Yes. With Platinum Ambassador. The same system used by the Concorde.

DANIEL

Have you ever flown the Concorde?

MARK

A few times.

DANIEL

As wonderful as they say?

MARK

Even more so. The Concorde was the chariot of the Gods.

DANIEL

You never fly coach?

MARK

You got to be a dunce not to negotiate an upgrade.

VIV

Mark has enough business miles from his trips to sit with the pilots if he wants to. Last year he sat next to Lady Gaga.

DANIEL

Do you tip the pilot?

MARK

What?

DANIEL

I do.

CALIE

He's pulling your leg.

(AWKWARD SILENCE)

How is your room?

VIV

Awful.

MARK

Rather small.

CALIE

You're kidding?

VIV

Your room is twice the size. And we're in the renovated wing.

CALIE

It's the same reservation and the same fee.

VIV

That doesn't mean anything.

CALIE

Do you have a view?

VIV

The parking lot.

CALIE

Oh fuck it . . .

MARK

I know we're in a 17th century castle, but we might as well be in a New Jersey Marriot.

DANIEL

We'll switch rooms with you. Calie and I will visit other castle Paradors. We can't get enough of these historic hotels.

VIV

Forget it.

CALIE

How about a cabernet?

VIV

Fine.

MARK

You can choose the bottle. I only drink half a glass.

CALIE

Daniel?

DANIEL

How about what we had the other day?

VIV

I'm not really into having a five course extravaganza.

CALIE

A la carte looks friendly.

DANIEL

The lamb and duck were recommended by our guide book.

MARK

My delicate bride's still working off her lunch. Isn't that so?

VIV

I'm in the mood for buttered pasta. Nothing else.

CALIE

I don't think they have pasta, Viv. It's not on the menu.

VIV

I don't care. It just popped out of my head.

MARK

Italy is the land of pasta, darling. You have to make another wish.

VIV

Potatoes or rice, that's Spain.

CALIE

At least today, yes.

VIV

I'll just stick with the soup.

(TO MARK)

What are you going to have?

MARK

Just a simple *tortilla*. I don't think I should gorge myself.

DANIEL

That's *tapas*, Mark. You can't just order an appetizer.

CALIE

We picked Siquenza for the food as much as the castle, Mark.

MARK

Yes, and it was a good pick all in all.

CALIE

You love Spanish high cuisine.

DANIEL

A *tortilla* is in the class of corn dogs and French fries.

MARK

True, but I wouldn't confuse this hotel restaurant with a three star Michelin.

(WHISPERS TO VIV)

If you want pasta, we'll get pasta.

VIV

(IN A LOW VOICE)

I love you, *Schatzie*.

MARK

Daniel, I read the first volume of Musil's sublime *The Man Without Qualities* in German last night. Thank you for recommending it.

DANIEL

You're welcome.

MARK

You read the English version?

DANIEL

Yes.

MARK

The original text is infinitely better. And Musil's more entertaining than Thomas Mann and Proust. You remind me of Musil's lead character Ulrich.

DANIEL

Are you flattering me again, Mark?

MARK

Of course if you grant me a little creativity. Ulrich is traumatized by his powerful father, despite Ulrich's high intelligence. And all of his good intentions, at his own expense, are so pathetic. *Einem geschenkten Gaul schaut man nicht ins Maul* (don't look a gift horse in the mouth).

CALIE

Shall I flag the waiter?

DANIEL

Do you know what you want?

CALIE

The pheasant.

MARK

Splendid. Daniel?

DANIEL

The lamb.

MARK

And we'll have pasta . . .

(TO VIV)

. . . with plain tomato sauce or butter?

DANIEL

Not a *tortilla* for you?

MARK

I'll have only what my darling's consuming. *Estamos listos, verdad?*

DANIEL

You're insulting the management, Mark.

MARK

Nonsense. We're tourists. They have to have some pasta in the damn pantry. I know exactly what to say without putting anyone out. It's a talent which runs in my family.

(LIGHTS FADE TO INDICATE A BRIEF TIME CHANGE.
THERE IS HALF EMPTY PLATES ON THE TABLE.
DANIEL RETURNS WITH A LARGE MANILLA
ENVELOPE TO THE TABLE)

DANIEL

Everything's been arranged. We've switched rooms. They're moving our luggage while we finish our meal. I tipped them fifty dollars in pesetas.

VIV

Daniel, that wasn't necessary.

CALIE

It's better this way.

DANIEL

Because this is your first Parador stay.

(HANDS THE MANILLA ENVELOPE TO VIV)

The watercolor of Skippy. The real Skippy. The Skippy few really see.

VIV

Inside this?

(DANIEL NODS)

Wonderful.

(TAKES OUT THE 8x10 PAINTING)

This is just gorgeous! Just like him and a little crossed eyed too!

(SHOWS MARK)

MARK

Very amusing. The tail's wagging in the wrong direction. Or am I dyslexic?

DANIEL

Suitable for framing?

VIV

Indeed!

DANIEL

What have I missed?

CALIE

Another O.J. episode.

VIV

And the last one or I'll break Mark's neck.

MARK

So two years ago I was stretching my long legs about 40 minutes into the flight, and O.J. stands up, walks towards me. We're about the same height, which pleases him. His baseball cap was still on his head. I think it said Oakland As. We made eye contact and I felt his sexual energy. I just had to break the ice. I said, "Juice, you lost the battle, but won the war." And he coughed a couple of times and said, "What the fuck do you mean?" And I said, "White America still thinks you got the stuff." I shook his hand and then asked for his autograph.

VIV

(APPALLED)

Not his autograph.

MARK

I succumbed to the situation. O.J. signed my boarding pass.

(PRODUCES AUTOGRAPH)

I'm going to frame it with the notorious Time magazine cover portrait of Simpson.

VIV

You blow my mind, *Schatzie*.

DANIEL

Incredible story, Mark.

MARK

I know.

DANIEL

My step-father Maxie has a great anecdote about picking up Martin Luther King at JFK airport.

MARK

How does that one go?

DANIEL

King couldn't get a cab among all the whites hailing a taxi. It was the early '60s and he wasn't recognizable. But Maxie picked him up. Three years later, King was at JFK again waiting for a cab. Maxie hustled to pick him up again. "Dr. King, it is my honor to drive you wherever and however far." Then he asked King if he remembered the first cab ride. King said he did. Maxie claims to have heard the first lines of "I have a dream" on the Van Wyck Expressway.

MARK

I believe you step-father met King the first time. I just don't believe the second encounter.

CALIE

I think you've been very rude to the waiter.

VIV

What?

CALIE

We made reservations for dinner, but you two just had a little spaghetti. No salad, no soup, no dessert, no wine. It's an insult.

VIV

Did we embarrass you?

CALIE

Yes.

VIV

Calie, get real.

CALIE

Imagine if Daniel and I ordered pasta at one of your pick hits - Mark would go on the rag.

MARK

(AMUSED)

You're right, Calie.

CALIE

You've spoiled our entire vacation week.

VIV

Calie, that's so over the top.

DANIEL

(PRODUCING A FAX)

This fax came to our room by mistake, Mark.

MARK

Oh?

DANIEL

It was slipped under our door. I guess they tried emailing you a few times.

MARK

My BlackBerry isn't getting reception in Siquenza.

DANIEL

(HANDS IT TO MARK AND MARK QUICKLY READS IT)

I'm awfully sorry.

MARK

Did you read past the cover page?

(DANIEL DOES NOT REPLY)

You can't say?

(MARK GLANCES AT CALIE)

VIV

What's up?

MARK

Something from London headquarters.

VIV

What? Bad news?

MARK

Yes.

VIV

Mark? How bad?

MARK

You know how they are in my office.

VIV

Are they asking you to fly back tomorrow?

MARK

Not quite, darling.

(HIS ATTENTION IS STILL FIXED ON DANIEL)

You didn't need to read my fax.

DANIEL

I'm sorry.

MARK

No, you're not.

DANIEL

Do you want to be alone?

MARK

Yes. Thank you.

CALIE

(INTENSE GLANCE ON DANIEL)

Daniel?

DANIEL

However we can help, just ask.

MARK

Schatzie, you know what I've been working for all my life.

VIV

What?

MARK

(OBLIVIOUS TO DANIEL AND CALIE)

There is no more money.

VIV

What do you mean?

MARK

We have no more money and I lost my job.

VIV

(DISBELIEVING THE CRISIS)

For Christsake.

MARK

I screwed up like never before.

VIV

One of your clients?

MARK

Yes, and then some. All my clients.

VIV

What is the firm doing to you?

MARK

Stafano and the firm found out more than what they needed to know.

VIV

Mark, what the fuck did you do?

MARK

I was out to make everyone doubly rich.

VIV

Schatzie . . .

MARK

There were gross indiscretions made with a pharmaceutical hedge fund.

VIV

I know about the fund.

MARK

No, you don't. We had to prove ourselves in six months. My job was on the line. I thought I could maximize a dozen portfolios by tweaking some things and come out a hero. But the market turned rapidly, and I was shorted in two weeks. It was the worst run of bad luck in my entire life. I did everything right even if this was a gamble. I just didn't get permission from any supervisor. It just looks like colossal fraud.

VIV

You traded company funds without approval? Who are you, Bernie Madoff?

MARK

Just about seventy years ago to this day in November, Jesse Livermore - the Speculator King - made Wall Street history. He built and lost incredible fortunes, but just after 5:30PM on November 28th, 1940, Livermore - impeccably dressed - finished a second martini at the Sherry Netherland Hotel Bar in Manhattan, walked across the lobby to an empty coatroom, and put a fucking Colt pistol to his head.

VIV

Mark.

MARK

(MIMING THE GUN GOING OFF)

BAM!

VIV

Did the firm force you to be this insane?

MARK

I was promised a six figure Christmas bonus if the deal went smoothly.

VIV

Oh Christ!

Stefano needed a scapegoat.

MARK

They fired you?

VIV

Yes.

MARK

This week?

VIV

No.

MARK

When?

VIV

Four weeks ago.

MARK

What? You sat on this for four weeks!

VIV

MARK

There was a remote chance that Stefano would reverse himself. I threatened to initiate a law suit. But that was stupid.

VIV

Did you go to the office at all?

MARK

No. I went to the British Museum or the Tate. I don't know what to do with myself.

VIV

So now I have to go to work again?

MARK

It's worse than that.

VIV

How can it be worse, Mark?

MARK

Citicorp's starting a criminal proceeding against me. The firm's just unraveling the news. There's more torture to come.

(PAUSE)

Inside trading with a broker from Brazil. San Pao's Fabio Miranda. He scammed me like I was the biggest jerk. So I had to sell your stocks in order to buy a few days cover.

VIV

My stocks?

MARK

I had no choice. I sold my portfolio to cover the hedge fund's modest money market account.

VIV

When?

MARK

Six weeks ago.

VIV

I don't believe you.

CALIE

Daniel, come on.

(SHE TAKES DANIEL'S HAND)

MARK

How could I joke about this? I'll probably get several years jail time.

(CALIE AND DANIEL EXIT)

VIV

Schatzie, did you actually do all this craziness?

MARK

None of this is my fault in the context of investment banking.

VIV

Oh God . . .

MARK

I'll call our lawyer and see what deal can be arranged. I'm sure I can plea bargain a deal.

END OF SCENE

SCENE FOURTEEN

(Lights fade to suggest passage of time. Calie and Daniel are back at the table with Mark and Viv)

VIV

We ordered dessert and more booze. We drifted into a sweet tooth. Indulge us, Calie. Try this wonderful glass of Spanish port.

(PAUSE)

Where did you go?

CALIE

Outside for a walk to see the castle lights.

VIV

Mark, we should do that before going to our room.

(TO CALIE AND DANIEL)

You must try the creme brulee. Just out of this world! Daniel, you look so sleepy.

DANIEL

I am.

CALIE

We're all exhausted, Viv.

(PICKS UP HER SPOON AND TRIES THE DESSERT)

VIV

I have to read you the poll results from a British magazine celebrating National Psychic Week.

(UNFOLDS PAPER FROM HER PURSE)

How many people believe in psychic healing in England? 54% do and 19% are unsure.

How many believe houses can be haunted? 42% believe. 16% unsure.

And telepathy between friends and family members?

CALIE

90% believe.

DANIEL

90% unsure.

VIV

90% with deep regret.

(REACHES FOR MARK'S ARM)

What time shall we all meet for breakfast?

END OF SCENE

SCENE FIFTEEN

(At Madrid Airport's curbside parking.

Mark and Daniel, carrying luggage, walk ahead of Viv with shopping bag and Calie)

MARK

We're fine on time.

DANIEL

Please send us photos.

VIV

I love these boots, but they need three months of breaking in.

CALIE

They look great on you.

DANIEL

(TO VIV)

Just take cabs in London.

VIV

We had a fantastic time, you two.

MARK

Great to see you.

Every Thanksgiving.

CALIE

So when I'm going to see you next?

VIV

First of spring?

CALIE

No later, Calie.

VIV

(TO VIV)

MARK

We better check in *Schatzie*.

(HUGS CALIE)

VIV

Everything will work out. Don't worry.

Love you.

CALIE/VIV

(THEY KISS)

MARK

(REACHES TO SHAKE DANIEL'S HAND)

Good luck with the novel.

Thanks.

DANIEL

(THEY SHAKE, THEN HUG)

Send it to us.

MARK

(DANIEL NODS)

I'll be between jobs for two or three weeks. Bank of America has an offer out and their west coast headquarters is San Francisco.

That's terrific, Mark.

DANIEL

Good to see you, Mark.

CALIE

(SHE REACHES TO HUG HIM)

VIV

(APPROACHES DANIEL)

Keep my sister away from the ponies, OK?

DANIEL

OK.

(VIV HUGS DANIEL)

CALIE

Better hurry you guys!

(VIV AND MARK GRAB LUGGAGE EXITING)

END OF SCENE

SCENE SIXTEEN

(Calie and Daniel are in bed in their apartment that night)

CALIE

I'm exhausted, Daniel.

DANIEL

I know.

CALIE

This felt like the longest day of my life.

DANIEL

There will be longer days, Calie. I feel it in my bones.

CALIE

I'm sorry.

DANIEL

What for?

CALIE

For lots of crazy things.

Thanks. DANIEL

I'm sorry about subjecting you to my family. CALIE

All families go through rough spots. DANIEL

Tolstoy said that. CALIE

In so many words. When will we be seeing them again? DANIEL

Very soon. CALIE

Mark won't get off that easily. DANIEL

I know. CALIE

His goose is cooked. And he's squandered Viv's savings. DANIEL

Viv is resourceful and can make money quickly in her field. They'll recover. CALIE

That's optimistic. DANIEL

I have to be optimistic. It will kill me to think otherwise. CALIE
(PAUSE)
Do you still love me?

I do. DANIEL

I trust you, Daniel. CALIE

DANIEL

Good.

CALIE

I need you. This is why it gets so hard.

DANIEL

But you're holding back something.

CALIE

I don't need to know everything that has happened in your life. And I think that's true about what you know about me.

DANIEL

Sometimes you're an absolute stranger to me, darling.

CALIE

I love you, Daniel. Sometimes I can glean things directly from your fiction. Is that an ugly thing to say?

DANIEL

No. What do you glean?

CALIE

That a good person is never always good, that sin doesn't have to involve evil, and redemption is all we can hope for.

DANIEL

That's so cogent and I'm flattered.

CALIE

I am not Viv's mirror image.

DANIEL

I know that.

CALIE

You told things to Viv that you never told me.

DANIEL

I'm sorry.

CALIE

Please don't ever do that again.

DANIEL

I promise. She got me talking. And you've told her something that I should know.

CALIE

What makes you say that? Hold me. I'm cold.

(HE HOLDS HER TIGHTLY)

I'm allowed to tell Viv things.

DANIEL

Sisters whisper. Brothers shout.

CALIE

Am I dishonest?

DANIEL

No.

CALIE

Am I a bad person?

DANIEL

No.

CALIE

Do you know why you fell in love with me?

DANIEL

I do.

(PAUSE)

Let's work on it, Calie. Our marriage is worth it.

CALIE

I should be more honest with you.

(PAUSE)

In the future, I will.

DANIEL

Yes.

CALIE

Yes. We should look to the future. Sometimes I'm not secure.

DANIEL

I know.

CALIE

Sometimes I keep secrets deep inside like a clam.

DANIEL

I know you want to go back to Los Angeles even if it means two homes for us. I've pulled you away from your vocation. You need to get back to professional acting.

CALIE

That's not it. I'm pregnant, Daniel.

DANIEL

Pregnant?

CALIE

We're going to have a baby.

DANIEL

Are you sure?

CALIE

Yes. I'm in my eight week. I think the baby is yours, Daniel. I'm sure the baby's yours, darling. But there's a chance the baby isn't. We can find out if you really need to know. When you were away at that Colorado conference, I had an audition with an old directing friend. It was a bizarre day and night in my life. I regret my behavior. And I didn't believe there would be consequences to my behavior.

DANIEL

Oh my God.

CALIE

We went out for dinner and I drank too much. You and I had a fight that week. Do you remember? I only told Viv that I was pregnant, Daniel. I'm going to term and it's going to be a very healthy baby.

DANIEL

(AFTER A LONG SILENCE)

How can you say this to me . . . I'm absolutely stunned.

CALIE

So am I. Please forgive me.

(SHE APPROACHES AND HUGS DANIEL FROM BEHIND)

When I had a dream about the Alarcon dog last week, the air had lost its chill. The evening was gentle. Not a sign of winter. There was a luminescent halo around the full moon. What a poor holy creature. He was freezing. Do you remember, Daniel?

DANIEL

I remember.

CALIE

In the dream, we were carrying the dog home to California. You were heroic in my dream. You gave up so many selfish things for this poor creature. I fell in love with you all over again. The distant stars were low. The sad sky felt ever so close. And we were entering the most beautiful moment of the night.

(SHE KISSES HIM ON THE NECK. LIGHTS FADE OUT)

END OF PLAY

SCENE ONE: London V/M

SCENE TWO: Alcalá C/D

SCENE THREE: 2 weeks later, V/C

SCENE FOUR: that night, C/D

SCENE FIVE: Wed, V/C/D

SCENE SIX: Wed, M/V/C/D

SCENE SEVEN: Mark's arrival Wed M/V/.C/D

SCENE EIGHT: Thur. morning M/C

SCENE NINE: Thur morning M/V/C/D

SCENE TEN: Fri morning, M/D

SCENE ELEVEN: Fri morning V/C (concurrent with above)

SCENE TWELVE: Fri evening V/D

SCENE THIRTEEN: Sat evening V/M/C/D dinner

SCENE FOURTEEN: Sat evening V/M/C/D dessert

SCENE FIFTEEN Sun. Madrid airport, V/M/C/D

SCENE SIXTEEN Sun evening in bed C/D

