Rivalry, Recognition and Rejection

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. PARIS/MONTMARTRE – DAY

INTERCUT:

Phone conversation between Monique/Horace

Sultry looking Parisian, MONIQUE (30’s), lies semi-naked on a well made bed.

She has her hand inside her black lace panties and is excited.

Bespectacled HORACE sports a paisley dressing gown and red cravat. He is overweight and also lies on a bed with a brandy glass in his free hand.

MONIQUE
How much do you missed me?

HORACE
More than you can ever imagine.

MONIQUE
Do you think about me?

HORACE
Oh yes.
(pause)
All the time.

She massages her pussy with her fingers.

MONIQUE
I want you.
(pause)
I miss you.
(pause)
I miss you touching me.

HORACE
Are you excited?

MONIQUE
Yes. Very much.

CUT TO

LONDON
INT. ARTIST’S STUDIO - DAY

Voluptuous Londoner DORIS (50’s) poses on a chaise longue.

Her red peignoir is fully opened, baring all.

She speaks with a London accent.

Parisian MAURICE (30’s,) stands at the easel where he paints her.

He has a broken accent and is tall, dark and handsome.

A dim fluorescent light hangs dangerously from the ceiling, as Carla Bruni plays at a low volume.

Beat.

After painting her for a bit, he downs his brush and steps forward in poetic fashion.

MAURICE
You sprung from the testicles of Uranus. Or you fell from the sky with Eros in tow. And you melted the hearts of the watchers there.
And I must be one of those observant fools, who breathes the air with a bosom in mind. And there you lie, like an angel without wings.

He kneels down to her and takes her hand as she cackles wildly.

MAURICE (CON’T)
Has thou a body, oh beautiful Goddess!

She applauds him as he climbs to his feet.

DORIS
Oh, you’re so mad, your are, Maurice.

MAURICE
I know, Doris. That is what motivates me. Poetry and art go hand in hand, and if you had listened carefully you would have noticed the verse was written in pentameter.
He returns to the easel and picks up his brush. After a while the dim light begins to flicker on and off. He throws up his hands in despair.

DORIS
What is it, Maurice?

MAURICE
Oh, this is hopeless! I am very sorry, Doris, but I cannot continue to paint you under this light any longer. I cannot concentrate with all this flickering on and off, on and off. My eyes are beginning to feel like I am being pricked with small pins.

She shifts uncomfortably.

DORIS
Oh. D’ you want me to go then?

MAURICE
No, no, non. Just give me a couple of minutes to sort myself out, that is all.

She appears perplexed as he marches over to the sink where he begins to wash his hands.

DORIS
Are you sure, Maurice? I don’t mind if that’s what you want.

MAURICE
No. If you go now my inspiration will be lost for the whole day.

She climbs off the chaise longue and buttons up her peignoir as he pours himself a glass of water from the sink unit.

DORIS
Well, you knew I was coming today, didn’t you? I thought you might’ve changed the flippin’ bulb by now though. You’ve had all week to do it, haven’t you?

He puts down the glass and turns to face her.

MAURICE
I know. I know, Doris. I’ve got enough to think about at the
MAURICE
moment—what with my exhibition and everything. I don’t know if I am coming or going lately.

DORIS
Look, I don’t mean to be rude, Maurice, but maybe you’re—

MAURICE
—Anyway, it’s practically finished.

DORIS
Oh. I didn’t know. Sorry.

MAURICE
Actually, would you like to see it now?

DORIS
Aw— not bleedin’ ’arf! I’ve been waiting for this moment to come.

MAURICE
Good. Come and see your beautiful self.

She glides over to the easel as he joins her.

MAURICE (CONT’D)
Mind you, I still have to put the finishing touches to it, you do understand, I hope?

DORIS

She nods her head in agreement and studies her portrait.

MAURICE
Good.

DORIS
(bemused)
Oh. I see.

MAURICE
I almost lost my vision completely—what with the bad light and everything.
DORIS
I understand.

MAURICE
Well, do you like it?

DORIS
I’m not sure.

MAURICE
Such wonderful definition. You are truly blessed in that department, Doris.

DORIS
(bashfully)
D’ you think so?

MAURICE
Oui. madam. And let us not forget—you are my muse.

DORIS
Am I?

MAURICE
Oui, madam. Even the great Picasso would have been blessed to have had you as his muse.

DORIS
Oh get off! I bet you say that to all your models.

MAURICE
No— I mean it, Doris, sincerely.

She scratches her head in wonder.

DORIS
She looks nothing like me, does she?

MAURICE
What do you mean? She’s every inch of you, Doris.

DORIS
She’s not what I expected. I must admit.
MAURICE
That is because you are standing too close. Move back a little and you will see yourself much more clearly.

DORIS
OK. I will.

MAURICE
Here—let me help you.

He stands behind her and moves her back a couple of paces.

MAURICE (CONT’D)
Any better?

She looks at him in disappointment.

DORIS
But my eyes are not that shape, Maurice, are they?

MAURICE
No—of course they are not, Doris. What do you think? It is not supposed to be an exact image of you.

DORIS
My nose isn’t that pointed, is it? And why do I have two of them?

MAURICE
Ha! Illusion is the first of all pleasures, mon cherie. It’s just an illusion, Doris.

DORIS
(dispassionately)
Oh. I see.

MAURICE
But it is most definitely you, Doris. Just look at her left ear.

She steps forward and takes a closer look.

MAURICE (CONT’D)
It’s art. And one persuasion Picasso used throughout one of his periods.
DORIS
Oh. I see. Is that why my hair is yellow and green? Was he all mixed up at the time then or what?

MAURICE
Ha! Very good, Doris. Very good.

She shifts to her left and stares at the portrait.

DORIS
I think I get it now.

MAURICE
At last, Doris! I was beginning to think you were-

DORIS
-No. Now I know what you meant when you said you were seeing double.

MAURICE
Oh, Doris! You are so unearthed! You need to get out more.

She looks at him dolefully.

MAURICE (CONT’D)
Visit some galleries. It will widen your knowledge of the arts. You will be amazed at what you can learn. Trust me, Doris.

DORIS
So is this how you really see me then?

MAURICE
No- of course not! I see you in many, many different lights. This is just one of those fascinating lights that I am exploring with at the moment.

DORIS
She looks like she’s had cosmetic surgery.

MAURICE
Oh- don’t be so ridiculous!
DORIS
Well, look at her. She hasn’t got any of my features.

MAURICE
That’s not true, Doris, and you know it.

DORIS
My face isn’t round either. People tell me I have a long face. In fact there is not one single aspect, apart from her tits, and my missing ear lobe that resembles me in the slightest, Maurice.

MAURICE
(facetiously)
To be honest, Doris, if I had painted her with a long face she would have looked to much like a witch.

DORIS
Well if that’s what you wanted, Maurice, all you had to do was ask.

MAURICE
But I am reinventing the past here, Doris. Why do you make it so personal? It is for my exhibition.

DORIS
(sardonically)
Ha! If only Horace could see me in one of those fascinating lights of yours. He would feast in flippin’ fervour, I’m sure of it.

She moves away from the portrait and collects her denim hot pants and red vest from the clothes rail. She climbs into them.

MAURICE
Doris, I just want you to know that I see you through the eyes of an artist.

DORIS
Do you?
MAURICE
Yes! And what if I had chosen another way? Like you say for example. It would have surely incited a temptation between us, non? And then what would your Horace say? That I am an unscrupulous artist? The artist that went too far with his adorable wife? An artist not worthy of his own time?

She cackles at the suggestion.

DORIS
Oh I know that, Maurice- But Horace sees me through the eyes of a pig.

She begins to snort like a pig as Maurice chuckles.

MAURICE
Very good, Doris.

DORIS
Ha! ‘ark at me! See what effect he’s got on me?

MAURICE
Clearly.

DORIS
I’m sorry, Maurice. I didn’t mean to have a go at you like that. I’m just really frustrated with everything at the moment.

MAURICE
It’s fine, Doris.

DORIS
So when is this exhibition then?

MAURICE
Next month actually.

She walks round the studio and studies some of the other artwork lying about the floor.

DORIS
So are these paintings going to be part of your exhibition as well?
MAURICE
Yes. All of them in fact.

DORIS
Are we invited, me and Horace? He loves art does Horace. He says without art the world would be such a dull place.

MAURICE
And he is absolutely right of course. Anyway what do you think... that I would not invite my muse and her pig to my exhibition?

She cackles.

DORIS
Ha! But what if someone recognizes me as the woman in the portrait? What do I say to them?

MAURICE
You engage them, Doris. There are going to be some very important people attending. You never know who you are going to meet and an exhibition.

DORIS
Yeah. I s’pose so.

MAURICE
Can you come back in the morning? I just need to put the finishing touches to the portrait.

DORIS
If you fix that poxy light bulb, I will.

MAURICE
I will do it immediately, I promise.

DORIS
And as long as you pay me, I don’t mind at all. I’ve only got to pop out in the morning. I’ll come here first if you like, is that cool? Is there really much more to do then?
MAURICE
About ten minutes or so.

DORIS
OK.

She bursts into unrecognizable operatic melody as she slips on her knee length leather boots.

He picks up a carafe of wine from the drinks trolley.

MAURICE
Fancy sharing a glass of this with me before you go?

DORIS
Aw- Yeah. Just a small one though. I don’t want to feel pissed before I get home. I don’t wanna give him any excuses to have a go at me.

He passes her a glass and pours the wine.

MAURICE
Here. Enjoy. It’s a Maalbec.

She knocks back a mouthful as he watches her closely.

DORIS
Hm. Very nice. Where’s it from?

MAURICE
Oddbins.

She cackles.

DORIS
No, I meant where’s it from, silly?

MAURICE
Argentina.

DORIS
I thought so.

MAURICE
Let us toast to something.

DORIS
I’ve got nothing to celebrate.
MAURICE
My exhibition.

DORIS
Oh. Yeah. All right then.

They clink their glasses and toast, then he hands her an envelope from his back pocket.

MAURICE
Here. Take this.

DORIS
Oh thanks. I could really do with this cash at the moment. I’ve had nothing at all in months. He doesn’t give me anything. I have to support myself you know.

MAURICE
Just make sure you come back here in the morning, please.

DORIS
No I will. I stick to my word.

MAURICE
Good.

DORIS
I don’t know what I would do if I didn’t have this model-thing-shit.

She cackles.

MAURICE
You are incomparable, Doris.

DORIS
Ha! Get off! I bet you say that to all your muses.

MAURICE
I only have one muse, Doris, and that is you.

DORIS
D’ you really mean that?

MAURICE
Oui, madam.
She steps forward and puts her hand lightly on his chest. They begin to kiss passionately before he pulls back, thus leaving her perplexed.

DORIS
We shouldn’t have done that, should we? It’s the flippin’ wine. It’s gone straight to me bleedin’ head as usual.

MAURICE
It is fine, Doris. Stop worrying.

DORIS
Is it? For you maybe.

MAURICE
Now hurry. You’ll be late.

DORIS
Oh shit! The time!

MAURICE
Oh! I almost forgot. I have something for you to take with you.

He picks up a folder from the computer desk and hands it to her.

DORIS
What is it?

MAURICE
It’s a play.

DORIS
What’d you want me to do with it?

MAURICE
Read it! I would value Horace’s opinion, if he could spare me the time.

DORIS
Oh. Sure. What’s it about?

MAURICE
Read it for yourself. I’m not very good with synopsis.

DORIS
OK. I will then.
MAURICE
It’s set in my hometown Paris.

She hands him her empty glass and collects her red leather jacket from the clothes rail.

DORIS
I really must get going before it gets dark.

MAURICE
Thank you, Doris. I really appreciate it. Shall I ring you later?

DORIS
Yeah. If you want.

He opens the door for her to leave.

DORIS (CONT’D)
Did you really mean what you said before?

MAURICE
I cannot remember. What did I say?

DORIS
You know, that thing about me being your only muse.

MAURICE
Oh that. Yes of course.

DORIS
Then kiss me again and I’ll believe you.

MAURICE
Are you sure we should be doing this, Doris? You’re a married woman after all.

He is taken aback as she throws her arms around his neck and kisses him passionately.

DORIS
Now I’ve got to go home and listen to that boring old fuck pig.

She cackles.
MAURICE
Ohmondieu! You are relentless, Doris.

DORIS
I know. See you tomorrow, then.

She pecks his cheek and exits.

MAURICE
Bye, Doris.

He closes the door shut and sighs a relief.

INTERCUT- CONT’D:

Horace and Monique.

Monique now sits upright on the bed. She has a glass of red wine in hand.

HORACE
Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! That would be just my bleedin’ luck.

MONIQUE
What time do you think you arrive here?

HORACE
I reckon about nine-ish.

MONIQUE
OK. Ring me when you are close.

HORACE
I will.

(pause)
Are you going to pick me up, or shall I jump in a cab?

MONIQUE
Are you crazy! What do you think? I will be there, waiting.

INT. APARTMENT

CU:

Doris enters and goes straight to the kitchen/ She carries a shopping bag full of groceries.

Horace hears her sound from the bedroom.
INTERCUT CONT’D

HORACE
Okay then, Stephen. Tell him, I’ll ring him back.

MONIQUE
(confused)
Stephen? Who is Stephen?

HORACE
Bye then, bye.

END INTERCUT.

Horace puts down the receiver and climbs to his feet.

He checks himself in the mirror, then descends the stairs carrying his brandy glass/ His laptop figures under his arm.

He enters the kitchen where Doris empties the groceries from the shopping bag.

DORIS
Who was that on the phone?

HORACE
That was Stephen. I rang Gordon, but I just missed him. He’s popped out.

DORIS
Liar.

HORACE
Who me or Gordon?

DORIS
You! Who else?

He walks to the...

LOUNGE

He pours himself a brandy from the drinks cabinet and then sits down in the armchair.

HORACE
And anyway, what’s got into you this evening? Had a bad day lying on your back again?
DORIS (OS)
Swivel.
(Pause)
And how come every time I come home
you’re on that blimmin’ phone to
somebody called Stephen? I’m not
stupid, Horace. Don’t take me for a
bloody fool!

HORACE
Hm. Debatable. I see. So you think
Stephen doesn’t really exist then?

DORIS (OS)
Probably not, knowing you.

HORACE
Well, I’ll prove it to you if you
like? I’ll ring him back and tell
him that my wife thinks he doesn’t
exist, shall I?

He opens his laptop and switches it on.

HORACE (CONT’D)
I was offered a part in a play this
afternoon. They’re doing a
production of War and Peace over at
the Globe.

Doris flies towards him excitedly as he begins to tap away
on his laptop.

He doesn’t look up.

DORIS
You’re flippin’ jokin’ me! Did you
ask if there’s a part in it for me?

HORACE
(casually)
No. Why?

She stands over him with added enthusiasm.

DORIS
Well. So what did you say to them?

HORACE
I turned it down, naturally.
DORIS
You did what!

HORACE
I turned it down. Why wouldn’t I? I’m too busy with my own plans at the moment.

DORIS
You turned it down! You turned it down! You big nincompoop!

HORACE
That’s right, Doris. Start insulting me, go on.

DORIS
I’m only asking you why you turned it down for god-sake!

HORACE
Because it wasn’t big enough, that’s why, Doris.

DORIS
It wasn’t big enough! It wasn’t big enough! You twerp!

HORACE
Look, Doris, it simply wasn’t worth my while. It was only a small part.

DORIS
You dickhead!

HORACE
That’s right.
(pause)
And anyway, Gordon and I have been putting our heads together. I didn’t tell you this before but we’ve been running a competition over the last six weeks and we have found a winner. We’re going to put his play on at the theatre. I’m very excited about it.

She turns away dejectedly.

DORIS
I need a flippin’ drink.

She stomps to the-
KITCHEN

She opens a bottle of Chardonnay from the fridge and pours herself a glass of wine.

HORACE (OS)
And anyway, Doris, I mean. Well. If they would have offered me the part as Nikolai Rostov, or even Pierre Bezukhov, I might have given it some thought. At least with Rostov you get to marry the beautiful Maria Bolkonskaya. Hm. Now that would have been a worthwhile challenge, I dare say.

DORIS
Oh. I wish I could get a flippin’ audition. I haven’t had anything in flippin’ ages.

He ignores her.

DORIS (CONT’D)
Do you know if they’re still auditioning? Did you ask for a part for me?

HORACE (OS)
No. They already have someone for Napoleon, I’m afraid.

DORIS
Oh fuck off, you twat!

She slams her glass down and turns away in anger. He roars with laughter as she stands with her back towards him.

HORACE (OS)
Well you know what I mean, Doris. Come on, you’re no Dame Maggie Smith are you?

She carries her drink with her to the lounge in tormented fashion.

He doesn’t look up.

DORIS
Can’t you see, I’m flippin’ desperate! I can’t go on like this, Horace! I need to flippin’ work!
HORACE
Change your agent then. I would.

DORIS
Are you sure they’re not auditioning for other parts? I bet you haven’t even asked, have you?

HORACE
Look, Doris, how many more times do I have to tell you, you’re not what they’re looking for. Why don’t you find yourself another career or something? You’re not cut out for theatre.

(Pause)
And anyway, you’re too old to play Maria. They’re looking for someone with a fresh face to play her.

DORIS
Oh, but you always say things like that. I don’t know what you mean. What do you mean? I look young under the lights with make-up on. They can do wonders nowadays. Maurice says I look twenty years younger than my age.

He looks up at her bitterly.

HORACE
Well, he bloody well would do, wouldn’t he?

DORIS
You’re so selfish. You don’t care about my feelings at all. I might as well not be here for all you care.

She storms out of the room.

HORACE (ASIDE)
I rest my case.

Long silence before the toilet is heard flushing.

DORIS (OS)
I’m classically trained you know!
HORACE (ASIDE)  
Hysterically trained, more like.

She re-enters with a face like thunder, then marches back to the-

KITCHEN.

DORIS
Shove it up your bleedin’ arse!

HORACE (OS)
I’ll have a go if you like?

DORIS
Oh get lost!

HORACE (OS)
Look, haven’t you got anything better to do? Change the sheets or something. Polish the tables for once. This place is gathering dust faster than your underwear drawer.

DORIS
I’m not your fuckin’ slave.

HORACE (OS)
I go to work, Doris. I shouldn’t have to come home and start cleaning your filthy mess!

She re-enters and slumps down on the sofa with her drink in hand.

She switches on the TV, and to his annoyance she begins to channel surf.

HORACE
Please, Doris, let me finish my work before you start playing with the TV, will you?

DORIS
You call that work?

HORACE
Well a least I’m not lying on my backside naked.

DORIS
Is that what you think I do all day?
HORACE
I dread to think what you do all day.

DORIS
You think I’m a whore, don’t you?

HORACE
No. I don’t think anything.

DORIS
Just because you can’t get it up without Viagra.

HORACE
Give me a break, will you?

DORIS
You started it.

HORACE
Then let me finish it, Doris.

A long silence as she continues to channel surf.

HORACE (CONT’D)
We’re changing our perspective
Gordon and I. Gordon wants to
present new work to our audiences
from now on. You know contemporary
plays that mark out new territory
in performance and subject matter—
that sort of thing. Gordon and I
have plans for the future, Doris,
and you could well be a part of
them if you play your cards right
and get off my back.

DORIS
I don’t want anything from you.

HORACE
You can be such an ungrateful
bitch, you know that?

DORIS
And you can be a pig.

HORACE
Why are you so bloody bitter?
DORIS
I’m not bitter. I’m angry, but not bitter.

HORACE
Get better, Doris, not bitter.

A long silence.

HORACE (CONT’D)
I’ll be directing this one if you want to come along and sneak a preview?

DORIS
Will there be a part in it for me?

HORACE
There might well be.

DORIS
In that case, I will then.

HORACE
No, I’m serious, Doris. There are going to be all sorts of things happening in this play we’ve chosen as our winner: We’ve got witches, whores, murderers - gypsies, tramps and thieves. This play has got the bloody lot. It’s a modern classic. It will have our audiences rolling off their seats with tears of laughter.

DORIS
It sounds hilarious.

She gets up and marches back to the kitchen where she pours herself another glass of wine, then returns to the sofa.

DORIS (CONT’D)
We never go out anymore.

HORACE
That’s because I’m very busy - and you should know that of all people, Doris.

DORIS
Are you ashamed of me, Horace?
HORACE
Only slightly.

She gives him a sad look as he sniggers to himself.

DORIS
You’re not funny anymore. I’m so sick of your childish humour.

She picks up a cushion from the sofa and lobs it at him, causing him to spill his brandy over himself and his laptop.

He throws his laptop down and jumps up from the chair angrily.

CHRIST! WHAT THE BLOODY HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU! YOU STUPID WOMAN!

He exits towards the kitchen and returns with a towel.

He wipes himself and his laptop down.

DORIS
That’ll teach you to stop having a go at me in future.

HORACE
Christ! What’s happened to your sense of humour?

DORIS
Nothing. I still have mine.

HORACE
You used to laugh at my quick fired wit.

She turns up the sound on the television to wipe him out.

TURN THAT BLOODY THING DOWN!

DORIS
Go to hell.

HORACE
I SAID- TURN IT DOWN!

He grabs the remote control from her and switches off the TV, then stomps over to the drinks cabinet and pours himself another brandy.

Doris lies down on the sofa and begins searching her phone.
DORIS (ASIDE)
Bloody bastard.

HORACE
There’s something else you should know while we’re at it.

DORIS
What’s that?

HORACE
I’m going to Paris in the morning. Gordon asked me to check out some play festival.

She climbs off the sofa and approaches him with concern.

DORIS
That’s a bit sudden, isn’t it?

HORACE
Yep. So I’ll be leaving early in the morning. Don’t bother waking up.

DORIS
Can I come?

HORACE
No. There’s no point. You’ll just get in the way.

DORIS
I won’t. I want to come. Let me come with you.

HORACE
And anyway, I’ll be too busy talking to people. You’ll just get bored. Stay here. Give Maurice a ring. See if he wants to have you again.

DORIS
But I don’t want to ring Maurice. I want to come to Paris with you.

HORACE
Take no for a bloody answer, will you!

She turns away disappointingly.
HORACE (CONT’D)
Anyway, I’ll be back Thursday evening. I’ll take you out for dinner when I get back.

DORIS
I’ll believe that when I see it. We might as well be flippin’ divorced for the amount of time we spend together these days.

HORACE
That’s not my fault. Maybe if you didn’t spend so much time lying on your back things would be different.

DORIS
Maurice pays me for my time. I don’t sit for nothing you know.

HORACE
Don’t you mean, lie?  
(Pause)
He’s a bloody fantasist. I don’t know why you waste your time with him.

DORIS
He’s not!

HORACE
He is!

DORIS
Well at least he’s not a misanthrope.

HORACE
I don’t know why you have to boost his bloody ego all the time.

DORIS
Oh rubbish! You’re just jealous because he’s talented, and handsome.

HORACE
Look, I’ve got work to do, so leave me alone.

She goes to the kitchen and pours herself another glass of wine then re-enters the lounge.
DORIS
If it wasn’t for my model-thing-shit, I’d probably have to work in some shitty bar somewhere. I mean, I’m not going to have this figure for ever, am I?

HORACE
What figure?

DORIS
This flippin’ figure, you wanker!

She storms out and slams the door shut behind her.

HORACE (ASIDE)
(regretfully)
Oh shit.

A long silence.
She re-enters and sits down in front of the TV with her mascara smudged.

HORACE
Guess what I went and discovered today?

DORIS
That you’re a pig.

HORACE
No. I discovered that I’m the fifth most important person in theatre.

DORIS
Big deal.

HORACE
And that’s official, I might add.

DORIS
Who are the other four?

HORACE
Well, Alan Mckenzie, Scott Richardson, Timothy Shaw, Gordon and then me. I’m in the ascendancy. It’s all the way up from now on. You see, my endeavours haven’t gone unnoticed after all. And it’s about time too. I’ve given my life to the theatre. All these years of blood, sweat and tears. I deserve a little bit of gratitude.
(pause)
Well aren’t you going to congratulate me?

DORIS
Why should I? What have you ever done for me?

HORACE
Your time will come, Doris, you’ll see. You just have to be patient. Just stick at it like I have.

DORIS
Yeah. Sure. I’ll believe it when I see it.

(Pause)
By the way, Maurice has written a play. He asked me if you would read it and give him some feedback.

HORACE
It’s not about you, is it?

DORIS
No.

(Pause)
Are you going to read it or not? I have to let him know.

He shakes his head fervently.

DORIS (CONT’D)
He just wants your opinion, that’s all.

HORACE
Is there a twenty pound note attached to every single page?

DORIS
No.

HORACE
Tell him no chance then.

DORIS
OK. I will.

HORACE
What about you? Have you read it?
DORIS
Not yet. I’m going to.

HORACE
Good, because I’ve got more important things to do with my time.

DORIS
OK. I’ll let him know.

HORACE (ASIDE)
(childishly)
Maurice has written a play. Maurice has written a play.
(aside)
Maurice has written a play

He pours himself another brandy.

She begins to send text messages on her phone.

DORIS
You don’t like him one bit, do you?

HORACE
Why, does it show?

DORIS
There’s nothing going on, if that’s what you think.

HORACE
Well, you’ve practically spent every day with him over the last month. It won’t be long before he’s sticking his tongue down your throat, will it?

DORIS
Don’t be so silly. He’s a flippin’ artist.

HORACE
And fantasist.
((pause)
I think you should stay away from him from now on.

DORIS
Why! That’s absurd! He’s painting me for god-sake!
HORACE
Lord only knows what you and him get up to in that studio of his.

DORIS
Ah! You’re jealous!

HORACE
No I’m not.

DORIS
Yes you are! You’re jealous of him!

HORACE
I wouldn’t be surprised if he was having you at every opportunity.

DORIS
He will be if you carry on like this.

HORACE
I would rather have my brain power thank you very much.

DORIS
You just can’t cope with the fact that I get my kit off for him.

He throws his glass at the wall in torment.

HORACE
THEN WHY DON’T YOU JUST GO AND FUCK HIM THEN.

DORIS
HOW DO YOU KNOW I ALREADY HAVEN’T?

She lobbs her glass at him but it misses and hits the wall.

HORACE
I BET HE’S HAD YOU IN EVERY POSITION KNOWN TO MAN!

DORIS
HOW FUCKIN’ DARE YOU INSULT ME! I’M S’POSED TO BE YOUR WIFE, YOU FAT PIG!

She lashes out at him and strikes him across the face.
HORACE
YOU FUCKIN’ COW!

He knocks her to the ground. She lies there sobbing.

DORIS
(re近些fully)
You’re a bastard, Horace Nugents.  
I’ll have you arrested for this.

He stares down at her triumphantly.  
Short silence.

DORIS (CONT’D)
How dare you hit me.

She bursts into tears.

DORIS (CONT’D)
I SAID HOW DARE YOU FUCKIN’ HIT ME!  
YOU PIG!

He turns away and snarls.

HORACE
Fuck it! I need a drink!

He pours another brandy into a fresh glass as she looks up at him with scorn.

DORIS
I’m going to have you arrested for assault. I’m going to make sure I fuckin’ destroy you, you cunt.

HORACE
I’m sorry.  
(pause)
Please forgive me.  
(pause)
I don’t know what came over me.

DORIS
Go away. Leave me alone.  
(pause)
Just go away.

She gets up and climbs the stairs to the bedroom where she changes into her nightwear.

The home phone begins to ring. Horace picks up the receiver.
HORACE
Yes-? Look we don’t want anything from you—Just fuck off and leave us alone—!

He slams the receiver down as she descends the stairs.

DORIS
Who was that?

HORACE
Who’d you think!

DORIS
How dare you speak to my friends like that!

HORACE
Then tell him not to ring you here!

DORIS
He’s a friend!

HORACE
Then tell him to get lost!

DORIS
You bastard!

HORACE
I mean it, Doris. Don’t push me.

He picks up his laptop and stomps past her up the stairs. She sits down on the sofa and begins to read messages on her phone.

BEDROOM
He throws his laptop down on the bed, then goes to the wardrobe.

He takes out a carved wooden box and carries it to the foot of the bed. He lifts out an antique pistol.

He stares at it for a bit then runs his finger down the barrel.

He returns the pistol to the box, then puts it back into the wardrobe.

He begins to pack a suitcase.

BTS
She makes a call on her mobile phone.

DORIS
Maurice- Aw- It’s okay- He was only joking- I’m sorry- He didn’t mean anything by it- Oh take no notice of him- Yes. I’ll see you tomorrow- OK. Ten o clock- OK. Bye then- Bye.

She ends the call and spots Horace’s mobile lying on the table.

She picks it up and reads the messages in his mailbox. She gasps as she looks up at the bedroom scornfully. Home phone rings. She picks up the receiver before he can get to the phone upstairs.

DORIS (CONT’D)
He’s upstairs. Hang on, I’ll call him.
(pause)
Horace. It’s for you.

He picks up the receiver in the bedroom.

HORACE
OK. I’ve got it.

She eavesdrops as she pretends to hang up.

HORACE (CONT’D)
Gordon- I have- I’ll email it over before I leave- No. I’m very excited indeed- Yes I did- She knows- I will- You should come- Ha, ha, ha, ha- I can’t wait- Ha, ha, ha- No, I don’t think I’ll be getting much of that- Ha, ha, ha, ha- She’s all over me like a rash- Yes- I should be back by then- OK. Great-! Johnny Allen’s sounds fantastic- Rightyo- See you Thursday, baring any problems- Bye.

Doris hangs up in sync, then lies on the sofa in the foetal position, as he carelessly whistles a tune and continues to pack his suitcase.

CUT TO
INT. ST. PANCRAS TRAIN STATION - DAY

Horace stands with his trolley case and wearing a black beret.

He looks up at the information screen above.

SFX:

DING DONG

V.O
We are sorry to announce that all trains out of Eurostar have been canceled, due to a signal failure at Paris Nord. Please contact the information desk about this service.

HORACE (ASIDE)
Bollocks!

CUT TO

INT. MAURICE’S STUDIO - DAY

Maurice stands at the easel when the doorbell rings.

He goes to the door and opens it to Doris, who stands in a suggestive pose and smiling.

Her fur coat unbuttoned as she reveals red French knickers and a bare chest.

MAURICE
Ohmondieu, Doris! What are you doing dressed like this?

He checks his watch.

DORIS
Are you going to let me in then?

MAURICE
Of course. And on time too. Quickly- before you catch a cold.

DORIS
(provocatively)
Oh do I, Maurice? Do I really?
MAURICE
(bemused)
Do you what, Doris?

DORIS
Tell me I do. Please say I do.

MAURICE
You do, Doris. You do.

He pulls her into his arms and kicks the door closed with his foot as she cackles wildly.

She lies submissively as he bends over her to kiss her pouting red lips.

DORIS
Do you like it, Maurice? Tell me you love it, go on.

MAURICE
I adore it! Sup-er! But you do mean the coat, surely, non?

He lifts her back onto her feet and guides her towards the chaise longue.

DORIS
Yes of course, silly. What else is there to like?

She slips off her coat and lets it fall to the floor beneath her feet.

He kneels down beside her and begins to stroke the fur.

MAURICE
Hm.

DORIS
What are you doing, Maurice?

MAURICE
Does it bite? Is it real?

DORIS
No, silly. I couldn’t afford real fur. It’s imitation beaver.

MAURICE
May I stroke it? It feels so soft and warm.
DORIS
Yes but be careful wont you? It’s moulting.

MAURICE
Moulting? But I thought you said it was-

DORIS
-Yes moulting, Maurice. So be careful with it please.

MAURICE
Do you mean, losing hair, Doris?
She cackles.

DORIS
Yes! Ha! Oh you know what I mean, Maurice, silly.

MAURICE
Are you sure, Doris?

DORIS
Yes! Oh what are you like, Maurice? Ha!

MAURICE
It feels so soft. I can barely keep my hands from it.

DORIS
‘ark at you! Oh come on now, Maurice- I haven’t got all day. I’ve got to be at the chiropodist in half an hour flat.

MAURICE
OK. OK.

He climbs to his feet and collects his brushes at the sink. She positions herself on the chaise longue.

DORIS
Are we ready?

MAURICE
I’m coming. I’m coming, Doris.

He goes to easel and begins to touch up the portrait.
DORIS
I really don’t have much time, I’m afraid. You will finish me this morning, wont you?

MAURICE
Oui, Madam. Now head up and chest out.

She exaggerates her pose as she puts her head back and lifts up her chest.

DORIS
Like this you mean?

MAURICE
Sup-er!

He paints.

DORIS
He’s gone to Paris this morning. He won’t be back till tomorrow. I’ve had enough of his bullshit. From now on I am going to do what I want. He can go and fuck himself for all I care.

CUT TO

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Horace as his mobile phone to ear as he waits for a bus.

INT. MAURICE’S STUDIO- (CONT’D)

MAURICE
So what will you do now? I mean, you will be all alone tonight, non?

DORIS
I don’t know. Maybe I need to let me hair down. I’m not just going to sit at home like some fuckin’ puppy dog.

MAURICE
Maybe we could go out tonight?

DORIS
Yeah. All right then.
MAURICE
Sup-er! I will wear my outrageous suit just for you.

DORIS
Ha! In that case I’ll put on my outrageous frock.

MAURICE
Will it have some cloth?

DORIS
Ha! Yes of course it will, silly. I only undress, Maurice. I don’t even undress in front of him anymore. I can’t even remember the last time we had flippin’ sex if I’m totally honest.

MAURICE
So what would he say if he found out I took you out for dinner?

DORIS
Well he’s not here is he? I don’t give a flying fuck anyway. I’ll do what I want. He does.

MAURICE
So when the cats away-

DORIS
-the mice definitely come out to play tonight, Maurice, you can bet your life on it.
(pause)
’ark at me! I sound like I’m gagging for it!

MAURICE
Touche, madam.

Doris cackles.

DORIS
You know I saw a message on his phone.
(Pause)
And then I listened to his phone call with Gordon, a work colleague. They were joking about some whore he’s meeting up with in Paris.
(Pause)
DORIS
I just don’t know what to flippin’
do now. I mean- what can I say to
him? Who’s that flippin’ tart
you’re shagging in Paris!
(Pause)
And what if I’m wrong? What if
she’s just a friend or something,
and he was just joking with Gordon
over the phone?

MAURICE
Ask him. You must.

DORIS
D’ you really think I should?

MAURICE
You must!

DORIS
I mean- what if it’s true and he’s
having all the sweets in the
flippin’ sweet shop?
(pause)
I don’t know what the fuck I’m
s’posed to do. Let him get on with
it, or flippin’ knife him to death
in his sleep.
(pause)
I’ve seen this sort of thing
happening to other people. I can’t
believe it’s actually happening to
me though.

MAURICE
Confront him. You must.

DORIS
Yeah. He’s got this flippin’ old
pistol that his great uncle left to
him. I was gonna shoot him while he
was asleep. I would’ve enjoyed
sticking it right up his flippin’
nose and pulling the trigger.

MAURICE
Ohmôndieu! This is far too extreme,
Doris, non?

DORIS
He’s jealous of you for some
reason.
MAURICE
Excuse me! He is jealous of me!
Why? Non! But he is the one having the affair.

DORIS
I know!

A long silence.

DORIS (CONT’D)
I see you’ve got a new light bulb then.

MAURICE
Finally. Now I can see you much more clearly, Doris. No more double vision.

DORIS
You’re so funny, Maurice. Nothing seems to bother you, does it?

MAURICE
Are you crazy? It takes me forever to do anything round here.

DORIS
Are we almost finished?

MAURICE
Finally.

DORIS
Good. My neck is killing me today.

She climbs off the chaise longue and slips on her coat.

MAURICE
All done, Doris! You are now free to leave.

DORIS
D’ you think I’ll make it in time for the chiropodist?

MAURICE
Dressed like this? You’ will be arrested for sure.

DORIS
No, silly. I’ve got to go home first.
MAURICE
Well you better hurry then.

DORIS
OK. Will I be seeing you later then or not?

MAURICE
Absolutely.

DORIS
Brilliant!

She kisses his cheek and opens the door to leave.

MAURICE
Will you be wearing this fur coat tonight?

DORIS
Is it a request?

MAURICE
Oui, madam.

DORIS
Just for you then, Maurice.

MAURICE
Sup-er!

She bursts into non-operatic melody then exits.

He closes the door behind her, as the phone inside his top pocket begins to ring.

He takes out his phone and takes the call.

MAURICE (CONT’D)
Hello—? Hello—? Is there anyone there—?

He slips the phone back into his pocket, then goes to the sink unit to wash his hands.
A loud banging at the front door.

He quickly dries his hands and goes to the door. Horace dressed in a black overcoat and French beret, barges into the studio pulling a black trolley case behind him.

Maurice stands aside aghast.
MAURICE
Horace, what are you doing forcing your way into my studio like this?

HORACE
Right! Where is she?

MAURICE
She went. You just missed her actually. She left just one minute ago.

HORACE
I thought I better see for myself exactly what’s going on between you two.

MAURICE
Excuse me?

Horace parks his trolley case by the door then begins searching the studio for his wife.

HORACE
Well don’t look so surprised to see me, Maurice. Where is she? In the bedroom?

He bangs frantically on the bedroom door.

Maurice stands and chuckles as he looks on.

HORACE (CONT’D)
Doris! Doris, you in there?

MAURICE
You will not find her in there.

HORACE
Doris! Doris! Come on out! I know you’re in there! I’ve come to take you home! I’m not angry with you anymore! It’s alright! Come on!

MAURICE
It is not locked, Horace. Open it and see for yourself.

Horace opens the bedroom door and peers inside, then quickly slams it shut again.

Maurice casually rolls a cigarette as Horace stands dementedly embarrassed.
HORACE
What are you sniggering at?

MAURICE
What are you doing, Horace? I could have you arrested for forcing your way into my studio like this.

HORACE
Go on then. Call the police, and I’ll tell them you’ve got drugs stashed away in here.

MAURICE
Drugs! OK. So find them.

HORACE
What’s that wretched smell then?

Maurice shows him the cigarette.

MAURICE
Tobacco.

HORACE
It smells like hashish to me.

MAURICE
Would you like me to roll one for you?

HORACE
I don’t smoke. Filthy habit.

MAURICE
Are you sure it is not your cologne that you can smell, Horace?

HORACE
Don’t be so ridiculous!

Maurice deliberately walks round Horace and sniffs the air.

MAURICE
Disgusting! Where did you get it? You should ask them for a refund.

HORACE
You trying to be funny, mate?

MAURICE
Non.
HORACE
Did she tell you I would be in Paris today?

MAURICE
She did actually.

HORACE
I thought so.

MAURICE
Anyway, she has gone to the chiropodist. If you leave now you will catch her.

HORACE
You look quite excited about something. Has she told you things about me?

MAURICE
Non.

Horace walks around the room and begins to peruse the artwork.

HORACE
I wonder who’s running your country sometimes. It certainly isn’t your Government is it?

Maurice punches the air triumphantly.

MAURICE
Ha! Vive le France!

HORACE
You what?

MAURICE
You English are so apathetic

HORACE
Don’t underestimate us, matey. (Pause)
So which university did you attend, then?

MAURICE
Sorbonne. Why?
HORACE
I went to Cambridge you know.
(Pause)
You obviously dropped out. I can see that. And did you?

MAURICE
Actually this is none of your business, Horace. Now what do you want? I am very busy as you can see.

HORACE
Why did you want her back here this morning? You had her yesterday. Couldn’t you have finished painting her then?

MAURICE
I could not work with the bad light yesterday. Ask her yourself.

HORACE
Are you screwing her?

MAURICE
Ha!

HORACE
Answer the bloody question! Are you fucking my wife?

MAURICE
Non! I do not fuck her! What do you think I do here! I am an artist! I paint her- that is all! And I pay her for it!
(Pause)
I will show you exactly what I do! Come!

Maurice leads him towards the portrait.

HORACE
Look, I’m not interested in your artwork, matey.

MAURICE
Oh come on, Horace, otherwise you will not be invited to my exhibition.
HORACE
Don’t expect any accolades from me, matey.

They stand looking at the portrait of Doris.

MAURICE
Here. Son what do you think?

Horace roars with laughter. Maurice looks at him all confused.

HORACE
You’ve certainly got her character right, I’ll give you that.

MAURICE
What do you mean by this?
(pause)
Your comments are very insulting. Constructive criticism I do not mind. You have gone down in my estimation, Horace. I thought you were more cultured than this.

HORACE
Alright. Calm down. But you’re no Picasso are you.

MAURICE
You are just not used to looking at this kind of art. I am reinventing something here with this particular project.

HORACE
I don’t want to disparage you, Maurice, but to me it looks like the work of a ten year old.

MAURICE
Now I know you are just being stupid. It is not possible to say such a thing.

HORACE
Well it’s definitely her, I’ll give you that. I can tell by the ear lobe, it’s missing.

MAURICE
I know that.
HORACE
And why does she have to be naked?
Why do we need to see her bush?

MAURICE
Because I am reinventing the past.
Women always showed their pubic
hair with this kind of art.

HORACE
Do you only paint naked women or
what?

MAURICE
Non. It is what you want to see
that is of the essence here. It is
simply an illusion. And you see her
bush, interesting— but I see her in
many different lights, and so it is
not just her beauty that you engage
with but something much more
ambiguous. Look at her muscle tone
for example. How many women do you
know have this kind of definition
at her age? Try to understand the
sensuality of her confinement.
(Pause)
Also, this particular work reveals
her versatility, and within the
setting the reflection of her
character is paramount to the
overall perception of the premise,
and so how you are supposed to
connect with her upon first sight.

HORACE
So what is the premise, then?

MAURICE
Indistinctness. I thought it was
obvious.

HORACE
Hm. Well. I suppose it’s got its
advantages. But she’s got quite a
temper when riled you know.

MAURICE
Hot blooded, like you then, Horace.
Maybe you are her teacher, non?
HORACE
You’ve got it in one, mate.

MAURICE
I’m not playing Devils Advocate, sorry.
(pause)
Can I offer you a drink or something?

They move away from the painting.

HORACE
No, thank you.
(Pause)
I want you to stay away from her.
No more painting her, right?

MAURICE
OK.

Horace looks him closely in the eye.

HORACE
Are you sure there’s nothing going on between you two?

MAURICE
Non.

HORACE
So why are you all hot and bothered then?

MAURICE
Obviously, because we Parisians perspire much more than you super cool Englishmen.

Maurice shows the extent of his perspiration by lifting up his arm.

HORACE
Hm. Whatever.

MAURICE
A real man!

HORACE
Primitive man, more like.
MAURICE
Look, Horace, have you come to my studio just to insult me—because if you have you can go right now.

HORACE
Just stay away from my wife.

MAURICE
There is nothing going on between us. Ask her yourself.

HORACE
Not yet there isn’t, maybe, but I sense something. I have a sixth sense when it comes to these matters. Ask anyone who knows me well. They’ll tell you that Horace Nugents can smell a rat a mile away. I’m perspicacious you see.

MAURICE
And I am a rat, I suppose?

HORACE
Not yet, but you never know.

MAURICE
I will stay away from her if that is what you want. But you will have to tell her too, and maybe she will not like it. I know it because she adores to be painted.

HORACE
Rest assured, I’m going to speak to her as well.

MAURICE
Are you going to support her then?

HORACE
How do you mean?

MAURICE
Well, I pay for her time. She does not sit for free, if that’s what you think.

HORACE
Are you suggesting that I don’t support my wife? That I choose to ignore her well being?
MAURICE
It is possible.

HORACE
Right then. First of all it’s none of your goddam business. And secondly, I pay my share of the rent for the flat. Doris is a vegetarian so she doesn’t cook for me since she cannot stand the smell of meat. I take my laundry to the launderette because she cannot stand the smell of washing powder. We live a baseless kind of life together—which is not entirely my doing. So if she behaved like a wife, she would be treated as a wife. But she chooses to live a separate life from me.

MAURICE
Fine.

HORACE
Good.
(pause)
Now that’s sorted, I’ll get going.

Horace collects his trolley case and opens the door to leave.

MAURICE
Did you read my play yet?

HORACE
(aback)
What?

MAURICE
I gave Doris a play. I hoped you would write me a review.

HORACE
No. Why would I do that?

MAURICE
Because I heard from somebody that the buck stops with you.

HORACE
Spot on. You could say as far as theatre is concerned, I am Mr. Omnipotent. I am the fifth most
HORACE
important person in theatre, and I have the power to make or break you. It all depends if I like you or not.
(pause)
And just because you write a play, Maurice, doesn’t mean I have to read it. If you had really wanted me to review your play, you should’ve entered our play competition before the deadline.

MAURICE
OK.

HORACE
Right-and remember what I said. No more painting my wife. Stay away from her, or else I will not be so generous the next time I come here.

He exits and Maurice slams the door shut behind him.

MAURICE
Bastard!

CUT TO

EXT. CHARLES DE GAULLE AIRPORT - DAY
MONIQUE (30’s), boards a plane.

CUT TO

INT. APARTMENT- NIGHT
HORACE is in high spirits as he sets four dinner plates at the dining table. He wears a safari suit and a cravat.

DORIS prepares a salad in the kitchen. She wears smart denims and a red blouse, and carries a glass of chardonnay at all times.

HORACE
Right then, Doris, I’ll sit next to Gordon, opposite our guest.

DORIS
So I’ll be nearest the door then?
DORIS
I’m not bothered where you sit.
(Pause)
I still can’t see why we couldn’t have gone out for dinner instead.

HORACE
Yes. That’s right, Doris, but this is a big opportunity for me—us to meet our new in-house writer.

DORIS
Only because you fucked up again.

HORACE
I know. I know. Don’t keep on about it. I did suggest Johnny Allen’s, but they were fully booked. And anyway, it’ll be a lot quieter here won’t it. It’ll give me a chance to get to know him better.

DORIS
Who is he, anyway?

HORACE
His name is Yusimi Yusimi. He’s Turkish as far as I’m aware. Apparently he’s been living in the UK for about a year or so, according to Gordon.

DORIS
Oh.

HORACE
Though his writing style reminds me a little of Jacque Prevert.

DORIS
Who’s he?

HORACE
A wartime poet who was known for his excellent wit.

DORIS
Is that where you get yours from?

HORACE
Most probably.
DORIS
He must have been very rude then.

HORACE
Provocative is the word you’re looking for, Doris.
   (Pause)
Anyway, we may have found ourselves a resident writer at last.

DORIS
So what’s his play called then?

HORACE
The Dead Playwright.

She chokes on a mouthful of wine and spits it out into the sink.

He approaches her with concern.

HORACE (CONT’D)
Are you all right, Doris?

DORIS
Yeah. Yeah. It went down the wrong hole. I’m fine.

HORACE
Are you sure you’re okay? Can I get you anything?

She looks up and gives him a knowing look.

DORIS
No. It went down the wrong hole, that’s all.

HORACE
You had me worried there for a moment. I thought you were choking to death.

DORIS
I’m fine.

HORACE
Look, I want to create an impression tonight, so you will behave yourself won’t you? I don’t want you making a scene. So lay off the chardonnay for a bit.

She carries the salad bowl to the table.
DORIS
I hope he likes fondue, then.

HORACE
What else have we got on the menu?

DORIS
Stuffed aubergines and rice of course.

HORACE
Excellent!
(pause)
You know you’re very efficient tonight, Doris. I’m very impressed.

DORIS
Good.

HORACE
They should be here any minute now. I feel quite excited. I’m really looking forward to this.

He goes to the kitchen and fetches a basket of bread to the table.

DORIS
Gordon should be doing this, not us. After all, he’s your boss, not mine.

HORACE
I know. I know. Don’t keep on, Doris. It’s only for tonight.

DORIS
He farts and you sneeze.

HORACE
I’m sure he would have, if my flight hadn’t been canceled. In fact, I shouldn’t even be here at all, so it’s a great opportunity for both of us, isn’t it?

DORIS
I was s’posed to be going out tonight.

HORACE
I’ll take you out for dinner tomorrow, how’s that?
DORIS
What about your flippin’ whore in Paris? And don’t think you’re getting away with it that easily. You’re not off the hook yet. I want to hear it from her lips that there’s nothing’s going on between you two.

HORACE
OK. OK.
(pause)
She caught me at a low-ebb that’s all. I let my guard down. I wasn’t thinking straight.

DORIS
I don’t want to hear your excuses.

HORACE
It’s over. Leave it at that.

DORIS
Well it wasn’t very nice having to cancel my night out. I was really looking forward to letting my hair down.

HORACE
And anyway, look, this could really benefit your career- providing you behave yourself and don’t get silly drunk like you did the last time Gordon came to dinner.

DORIS
Well, I better not have anymore to drink then. Another glass of this and I’ll be all over the flippin’ place by the time they arrive.

He goes to the cabinet and pours himself a glass of brandy.

HORACE
Please don’t show me up, Doris. I want to create a nice pulse to the evening if possible.

DORIS
That all depends if Gordon is nice to me or not.
HORACE
Gordon isn’t coming here for your benefit, Doris. The only reason he’s coming here at all is to meet Yusimi Yusimi.

Doris cackles.

DORIS
Oh dear. I really don’t know if I’ll be able to contain myself.

HORACE
Just remember Gordon is not here for your benefit.

DORIS
Oh don’t be so silly. I know that. I’m not stupid.

HORACE
Good. And no grovelling or I’ll be very upset with you. I mean it, Doris.

DORIS
It’s all right for you. I’ve not had any work in flippin’ months.

HORACE
Well if I were you, I would just let Gordon and I deal with Yusimi first.

DORIS
I will. I will.

HORACE
You just stay out of his face. I’m warning you, Doris.

DORIS
OK. OK. I will— Unless he ignores me. Then I’ll shove it right up his arse!

Doris cackles.

HORACE
Please pack it in, Doris. They’ll be here any minute.

He flicks through the CD collection as she brings a bowl of cheese and olives to the table.
HORACE (CONT’D)
What shall I put on?

DORIS
Anything. I’m not bothered.

HORACE
What about Chopin?

DORIS
Whatever.

He sets the CD at a low volume to the music of Chopin.
Doorbell.

HORACE
Right.

They stand looking at the door in anticipation.

DORIS
Answer it then.

HORACE
Rightyo. I’m going.

DORIS
Go on then.

HORACE
You fetch the wine.

DORIS
Yes, sir.

He hops to the door as she glides towards the kitchen. He opens the door to MONIQUE. She stands in a black slinky dress, seamless stockings and black stiletto heels.

His legs buckle underneath him as he grabs the door frame for support.

HORACE
Monica- What are you doing here?

MONIQUE
You didn’t come. I waited for you, but you didn’t come. What happened?

HORACE
Ssh. What are you doing here? You can’t come here, you know that.
MONIQUE
I waited and waited— but you never arrived.

HORACE
I know that. But you can’t come here. You’ll get me shot.

He checks over his shoulder.

MONIQUE
But I had to see you. Something could have happened to you. I was worried about you.

HORACE
You have to go. I’ll ring you.

Doris brings the wine to the table as Horace steps behind the front door.

DORIS
Horace, who’s that?

He puts his head round the door.

HORACE
It’s all right. I’m dealing with it.

Doris uncorks the wine.

MONIQUE
When will you ring me?

HORACE
I don’t know. Didn’t you get my message? All the trains were canceled due to a signal fault at your end. I sent you a message. Didn’t you read it?

Doris looks up and quickly becomes suspicious. She approaches the door.

DORIS
Horace, what are you doing? Who’s at the door?

HORACE
(to Monique)
I’ll call you.
MONIQUE
No! Let me in or I will scream.

Doris peers over his shoulder and spots Monique standing in the doorway.

DORIS
WHAT THE FUCK IS SHE DOING HERE?

HORACE
It’s okay, Doris. I’ll handle this. Go away.

DORIS
I WILL NOT GO AWAY! LET HER IN NOW! I WANT TO HEAR IT FROM THE HORSES MOUTH THAT ITS OVER BETWEEN YOU TWO!

HORACE
Oh shit.

He steps aside and Monique boldly enters.

Doris immediately confronts her.

MONIQUE
Merci beaucoup.

DORIS
SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

HORACE
Doris, please calm down. There’s no need to shout at her.

MONIQUE
What do you think?

DORIS
Enlighten me!

HORACE
Look- there was a misunderstanding, that’s all.

DORIS
So what the fuck is going on between you two then?

MONIQUE
(to Horace)
Tell her, or I will.
DORIS
I beg your flippin’ pardon?

MONIQUE
Tell her, Horace.

DORIS
BUT HE’S MARRIED TO ME, DOPEHEAD!

HORACE
Look, Doris- I can explain every-

DORIS
-Oh shut the fuck up!
(pause)
Did he invite you here to dinner
this evening?

MONIQUE
(adamantly)
Not really. I have come to take him
back to Paris with me.

HORACE
(dreadfully)
I’m not going anywhere! I’ve got a
very important guest coming here
for dinner, for Christ sake!

DORIS
(anxiously)
So are you two an item or what?

MONIQUE
Look, your marriage is over.

HORACE
Well. Hang on. Wait a minute,
Monica. I think I might have
something to say about that.

DORIS
Is that what he says to you when
he’s fucking you?

HORACE
No! I made a mistake.

MONIQUE
He said you were having an affair.

He wipes his sweaty brow with a handkerchief and sits down
deflatedly at the dinner table.
DORIS
It was just an excuse to get you into bed, love. I’m not having an affair with anyone.

HORACE
It wasn’t like that, Monica. I said she might be-

MONIQUE
-Menteur!

HORACE
Look—can we just calm down for a second?
(pause)
I can explain everything if you’ll both just let me sort my head out a minute.

DORIS
It better be good, Horace.

MONIQUE
May I sit?

DORIS
I s’pose so.

Monique sits opposite Horace. Doris sits next to him. An awkward silence for minute.

HORACE
Would anyone like a drink?

Horace grabs the bottle of red on the table.

MONIQUE
Est-il Francais?

DORIS
(begrudgingly)
No. It’s a Rioja.

MONIQUE
Merci.

Doris grabs the bottle of white.

DORIS
I’ll pour my own.

He pours Monique a glass of red. DORIS pours her own.
HORACE
(to Monique)
Olive?

MONIQUE
Sont-il bourres?

HORACE
Oui.

MONIQUE
Merci beaucoup.

He pushes the bowl of olives towards her. Doris angrily gets to her feet.

DORIS
Right! No speaking French or you can both sling your hook right now!

MONIQUE
Fine.

HORACE
OK. OK. Sit down.

Doris gives him a warning look and sits down.

HORACE
Monica, I’m sorry you’ve come all this way but quite frankly it’s over between us.

(pause)
To be absolutely honest with you, I was slightly confused. I believed Doris was having an affair. It turned out I was wrong. I imagined the whole thing. I needed to talk to somebody about it, and you came along.

MONIQUE
So you used me?

HORACE
No. Not quite. Let me finish.

MONIQUE
But in the bed you told me you loved me, remember?
DORIS
YOU BITCH! GET OUT!

Doris dives across the table towards Monique.

HORACE
Doris! No!

Horace quickly intercepts and checks her path.

DORIS
You whore!

Monique fearfully climbs off her seat and moves away from the table shaking.

HORACE
Doris, just hold on a minute will you? Give her a chance to speak!

DORIS
HOW DARE YOU LET HER INSULT ME! GET HER THE FUCK OUT OF HERE BEFORE I KILL THE BITCH!

HORACE
Monica, you can’t talk like that in front of Doris. She’s very upset.

Telephone begins to ring. They all look at the phone.

MONIQUE
Crazy.

DORIS
Get her out of here, Horace.

HORACE
She’s going in a minute.

The phone continues to ring.

DORIS
(to Monique)
Out!

HORACE
Wait a minute!

Doris picks up the phones receiver and puts it to her ear.
DORIS
It’s Gordon.

She smacks the phone’s receiver into Horace’s groin. He crouches in agony then puts the phone to his ear.

HORACE
Gordon—Oh. I see—Why not—? I see. Right—Right. Well thanks a bloody bunch—I will, don’t you worry about it!

He slams down the receiver and stands for a moment in reverie. Doris stares threateningly at Monique.

DORIS
(to Horace)
What’s wrong now?

HORACE
Gordon’s not coming. Something’s turned up as usual. I bloody well knew he’d do this to me at the last minute! I can read that man like a bloody book!

DORIS
Oh well. Now get your whore out of here before I do something I’ll regret.

HORACE
Look, Doris! Will you just shut up for one minute! I need to think!
(Pause)
A fine evening this is turning out to be.
(pause)
Monica, sit down.

Monique sits at the table and begins to cry. Doris looks on in dismay.

HORACE (CONT’D)
So if Gordon’s not coming, that means there’s a spare place at the table.

DORIS
You’re not suggesting that she—
HORACE
-Yes. I think it would be a good idea if Monica stayed for dinner.

DORIS
If she stays, I go.

HORACE
Think about it, Doris.
(pause)
Yusimi Yusimi?

DORIS
You get stuffed! She’s not staying here! You get her out or I’m off!

MONIQUE
Call me a taxi and I will go. I do not want to stay here with your crazy wife and longer than neccessary.

DORIS
Good. Call her a taxi.

HORACE
Doris, Gordon has left me to do this interview alone, so it makes complete sense if Monica stays for dinner. It’ll be a good idea.

A short silence.

DORIS
If I hear one word about your sordid little affair once more, I’m off.

HORACE
Right. That’s sorted.

DORIS
If she says one flippin’ single word about you and her in Paris, I’ll go for her. I mean it.

HORACE
No one’s going to say another word about it, right, Monica?

MONIQUE
Yes.
HORACE
Right. I need to take a leak. Can I trust you won’t claw each others eyes out whilst I’m gone?

DORIS
Hurry up.

Horace exits.
An awkward silence between Doris and Monique.

DORIS (CONT’D)
You can go now. I’ll tell him you left of your own accord. He’ll understand, don’t worry. Go on.

MONIQUE
I am not leaving without him.
(pause)
Anyway, I have no where to go.

DORIS
You can’t stay here!

MONIQUE
Why not?

DORIS
Listen, cloth ears! Horace is my husband! D’ you think for one moment that I’m going to let you take him away from me?

SFX:
The toilet is heard flushing.

MONIQUE
He doesn’t love you.

DORIS
We’ll see about that when he comes back. I’ll ask him.
(Pause)
Anyway, I forgot to ask— why did you come here?

MONIQUE
He was supposed to have come to paris. We were going to—

Doris bangs her fist on the table as Monique jumps to her feet.
DORIS
-He is married to me, dope head!

HORACE (OS)
Doris! Stop it!

HORACE enters and takes his seat back at the table. Doris throws herself back in frustration.

HORACE (CONT’D)
Can we just have some decorum here?
I’ve got a very important guest arriving here any second now—so please, pack it in!

DORIS
You’ve got a friggin’ nerve bringing your slut here, Horace Nugents. I bet you planned it all along, didn’t you?

MONIQUE
Horace, please let’s go.

HORACE
Are you stark raving mad! I have a very important guest arriving!

Doorbell.

HORACE (CONT’D)
He’s here. Now please—both of you.

DORIS
Maybe it’s another one of your sluts arriving.

MONIQUE (ASIDE)
Ridiculous.

HORACE
Doris, be nice, please.

Horace opens the door to Maurice, who stands dressed in a bright red suit and wearing a whit beret. He clutches a bottle of bubbly and a box of chocolates.

MAURICE
(excitedly)
Ah, hah!

His smile turns into a grimace as HORACE snarls at him.
HORACE
What do you want?

MAURICE
Er. Well. Actually, I-

HORACE
-I thought I told you to stay away from us. Now piss off!

He attempts to slam the door shut, but MAURICE is too quick and slips his foot inside the gap.

MAURICE
Not too hasty, Horace. I have come to-

HORACE
-I said all I’ve got to say to you, buddy. Now go away before I knock your block off.

Doris rushes to the door. Monique shows a look of interest.

DORIS
Maurice, is that you?

MAURICE
It is moi.

Maurice needs the toilet and holds his crotch.

MAURICE (CONT’D)
Please-?

HORACE
No! Fuck off before I lose my temper!

Doris pushes Horace away from the door and occupies his space.

DORIS
Let him use the toilet for goodness sake—what’s wrong with you?

HORACE
Tell him to get lost before I’m arrested for GBH!

DORIS
Of course you can use the toilet, Maurice.
He enters as Horace face contorts with anger.

MAURICE
Thank you, Doris. I will be quick, I promise.

HORACE
Hurry up about it. I’m going to time you. You’ve got thirty seconds or I’m personally going to come in and throw you out!

Maurice’s attention quickly turns to Monique as she stands quietly away from the dining table.

She recognizes him immediately and excitedly runs towards him.

MAURICE
Ohmondieu! Monique! Mais que’st-ce que tu fais ici?

They hug and peck cheeks as Horace and Doris look on in wonder.

MONIQUE
Oh mon dieu, Maurice! It is you! Oh mon dieu! Que fais tu ici?

DORIS
Oh shit!

Doris skips to the kitchen as they continue hugging and kissing.

MAURICE
I cannot believe my eyes when I saw you!

MONIQUE
Me too!

HORACE
(intervenes)
Alright! Alright! Alright! Put her down for Christ sake! What do you think this is the Folies Bergere?

MAURICE
Horace, this is Monique. She was my fiancé.
HORACE
I know who the bloody hell she is, or she wouldn’t be here, you fool!

MAURICE
We were going to get married but-

HORACE
-you decided you wanted my wife instead?

MAURICE
Non!

HORACE
Look, just use the toilet and fuck off will you?

Maurice releases himself from her grasp and confronts Horace.

MAURICE
Where is it?

HORACE
Door to the left.

MAURICE
Cool.

Maurice exits.

MONIQUE
We were going to be married.

HORACE
You don’t say.

MONIQUE
Maurice is the artist I told you about, remember?

HORACE
So what. I don’t care.

Doris enters carrying a pot of rice to the table.

DORIS
Monique, why don’t you give me a hand in the kitchen.

Monique shrugs her shoulders, then follows Doris to the kitchen. Horace turns away in frustration.
HORACE (ASIDE)
You couldn’t make it up!

The toilet is heard flushing before Maurice re-enters.

MAURICE
Thank you for that. I was busting my guts.

HORACE
Now you can go.

MAURICE
You are just angry because me and Monique are already acquainted, eh?

HORACE
No!

Monique enters from the kitchen carrying a tray of stuffed aubergines.

MONIQUE
Oui.

MAURICE
Horace, Monique is the only woman I ever truly loved.

(adoringly to Monique)
We were going to be married but then—how you English say? We had a lovers tiff.

MONIQUE
Et un combat.

MAURICE
Ha, ha! Oui.

HORACE
I suppose you want her back now you’ve finished with my wife?

Doris enters carrying a bowl of sauce.

DORIS
Oh for god sake, Horace! Stop acting like a wanker!

Doris marches back to the kitchen. Monique follows her.
MAURICE
I think you are being ridiculous, Horace.

HORACE
I know.

Doris brings the pot of fondue to the table. Monique brings another bottle of red.

DORIS
Now let’s all sit down and eat before it gets cold.

Maurice rubs his hands together.

MAURICE
Mannifique! Where would you like me to sit?

HORACE
You’re not sitting anywhere, matey.

MAURICE
Oh come on, Horace!

HORACE
This table has been set for four people, and you are not one of them. So if I were you I would sling my hook now.

pause.

MONIQUE
If Maurice goes, I go too.

Monique and Doris position themselves next to Maurice.

DORIS
And I go, three.

HORACE
I see. A double whammy.

Maurice shrugs his shoulders dismissively.

DORIS
So?

HORACE
Are you sure you can fit them into your little bed?
DORIS
He can’t. But I can fit them into our double bed if you like?

HORACE snarls then reluctantly sits down at the table. Maurice sits opposite him as Doris sits down next to him. Monique sits next to Maurice.

HORACE
I was supposed to be having dinner with Gordon and Yusimi Yusimi. How on Earth did this happen?

The mood changes for the better as they begin to eat. Horace tops up their glasses with more wine.

MAURICE
Thank you, Horace.

MONIQUE
Bon apetite.

MAURICE
This is very good.

DORIS
Thanks.

MONIQUE
Exquisite.

DORIS
I stuffed the aubergines myself.

MAURICE
The olives! I adore olives with garlic and lemon.

HORACE
(grumpily)
I made them
(pause)
Nothing to it really.

MAURICE
Compliments.

DORIS
You can buy them from the supermarket already made.
HORACE
(edgy)
Yes. True. But not as good as mine.

DORIS
Debatable.

Horace gives her a warning look as Maurice guffaws.

DORIS
So, Monique, it looks like you’ve found yourself a bed for the night. You must be over the moon, no?

MONIQUE
Oh yes. I am so excited to see Muarice again.

DORIS
Maurice has got his own studio flat.

Horace throws up his arms in despair.

HORACE
No flippin’ way! Monica can stay at Mal Maison. I will take her over there myself later.

MAURICE
No, no, no, no, non! Vous pouvez dormir avec moi!

HORACE
You have got to be joking, matey! She is not staying with you!

MONIQUE
Actually, I will sleep with Maurice. After all- we are not strangers. We have slept in the same bed before. (titteringly) Beaucoup de fois.

A burst of laughter as Horace looks on tormentedly.

HORACE
You are not going to sleep with him, Monica! I wont have it!
DORIS
What’d you mean? She can sleep with who ever she likes, control freak!

HORACE
Please stay out of this, Doris!

MAURICE
I think Monique is old enough to make up her own mind where she wants to spend the night, papa.

Horace throws down his napkin and angrily climbs out of his seat.

HORACE
I warned you! Get up!

MONIQUE
(imploringly)
Ah! Ce soir je veux danser juste et oublier de toute la douleur de l’amour!

DORIS
Oh sit down, Horace, for god-sake.

Horace sits back down as he gives Maurice a threatening stare.

A long silence as they continue to eat.

MAURICE
Actually, I know a nice little French club close to Piccadilly Circus. You must know the one I mean, Horace?

HORACE
I have no idea what you’re talking about.

MAURICE
Oh. Sorry.

DORIS
(to Maurice)
I’ll put on my outrageous dress. You know, the one we spoke about earlier.
MAURICE
Mannifique!

HORACE
I can’t go anywhere. I’m waiting for Yusimi Yusimi to get here. Where the hell has he got to?
(pause)
I bet Gordon knows something I don’t. That’s most likely why he canceled—because he knew he wasn’t coming after all.

Maurice puts down his knife and fork then wipes his hands on a napkin.

He climbs to his feet and stares down at the unsuspecting Horace, who continues to shove food into his mouth.

Doris looks up at Maurice knowingly and smiles.

MAURICE
(boldly)
Well, actually he is here.

Horace glances up at Maurice with a look of dismay.

HORACE
What?

MAURICE
I said— he is here.

HORACE
(fearfully)
Who is here?

MAURICE
Yusimi Yusimi.

CU: Horace stops chewing a mouthful of food as his face begins to turn white.

MAURICE (CONT’D)
Do, you-see-me?

Horace begins to choke on a mouthful of food.

DORIS
Flippin’ hell!
MAURICE
Oh shit!

MONIQUE
Ohmondieu! What is happening?

Maurice moves quickly to give him the Heimlich Manoeuvre. The women move away from the table in shock and awe.

MAURICE
Quickly- fetch some water! Hurry!

A piece of food flies out of Horace’s mouth. Doris hurries to the kitchen and returns with a jug of water.

She hands the water to Maurice. He pours a glass and hands it to Horace.

MONIQUE
His face is pourpré.

MAURICE
He will be fine.

Horace drinks the water as Maurice stands behind him.

DORIS
Are you okay, Horace?

Horace begins to clear his throat.

HORACE
I’ll be okay in a minute, Doris.

They sit back at the table in anticipation.

MAURICE
That was close, non? You had us all worried for a moment.

Short silence.

HORACE
I didn’t see that coming, I must admit.

MAURICE
I am sorry, Horace- but it was meant to be a surprise.
HORACE
And it certainly was that. Very clever. Very clever indeed.

MAURICE
(bumptiously)
I used a pseudonym.

HORACE
I can see that.
(Pause)
You must think I’m a fool.

MAURICE
Non! Not true at all!

HORACE
So is this the same play you gave Doris for me to read?

MAURICE
Yes. It is my only play.

HORACE
What inspired you to write a play about the rise of Shakespeare? He wasn’t even French, was he?

MAURICE
He is a very interesting person, non? Just because he was an Englishman does not mean he cannot be reincarnated as a Frenchman.

HORACE
No. I never said he couldn’t.

MAURICE
Oh. Sorry.

HORACE
So do you still want my assessment of your play?

MAURICE
Yes! What do you think? This is why I am here actually.

HORACE
Well I’ll give it to you— and then you can fuck off back to your studio!
MONIQUE
Ohmondieu! You are so rude! I cannot believe my ears!

DORIS
Horace! That’s not nice! Maurice saved you from choking remember!

HORACE
Yes- but you’re forgetting who caused me to choke, Doris.

MAURICE
Hey! Come on, guys!

Horace calmly takes a sip of water and clears his throat.

HORACE
OK. Here goes then.

Maurice is all ears as he readies himself for Horace’s critique of his play.

HORACE (CONT’D)
Actually, I did enjoy reading your well drafted play, focusing upon life after death of English playwright William Shakespeare. I mostly enjoyed its contemporary theme. I thought the work was poignant, well paced and thought provoking, and the characters quite remarkable, which created a surreal, yet enchanting tempo throughout. The dramatic exploits of the main protagonist within the play is momentous. The central premise, that eerie question, is there life after death? Reincarnation is a very interesting theme to put out there even in a comedic sense.

Horace looks uop at Muarice and takes another sip of water.

MAURICE
(fervently))
Please continue.

HORACE
I haven’t finished.
(pause)
Of course, the removal of places of rest would be beneficial for
HORACE

certain wider societies. The Dead Playwright’s social, spiritual and cultural well being included.

Maurice leans across the table with added enthusiasm.

MAURICE

This is so incredible.

HORACE

The play itself is written with profound like pitch and penetrating skill, which asks fundamentally important questions about family values and respect for the dead, no matter their moral status. The work also has good structure without being polemical, so making it an excellent pleasantry and plot. You have yourself a very good play, Maurice. Well done.

MAURICE

That was music to my ears. I have waited so long for something like this to happen.

HORACE

Was it?

MAURICE

It was.

(pause)

You know, Gordon did call me. He told me that you had written me a very good critique, and that you wanted to put it on stage.

HORACE

Did he indeed?

MAURICE

Yes.

HORACE

So I suppose you think you’ve got one over on me now?

MAURICE

Non! I want to work with you, Horace! I want us to work together with my play you like so much!
HORACE
I see. You’re quite a man, aren’t you, Maurice?

MAURICE
Excuse me? I am not with you.

HORACE
Well, you’ve got your feedback now, haven’t you?
(pause)
Now you can fuck off!

DORIS
(intercepts)
Horace! No! That’s not fair!

HORACE
Well look at him! Sitting there all chuffed with himself like he’s just won a raffle or something!

MAURICE
No, no, no, no, non! That is so unfair! I only want to work with you, that is all, Horace!

HORACE
No chance.

Monique lends Maurice her sympathy as she puts an arm around him.

HORACE
So do you want everything I own, Maurice?

MAURICE
Excuse me?

HORACE
Well, do you want the shirt off my back for good measure before you go clubbing? Or maybe you’d prefer to wait until I’m completely out of your way? I’ll just kip on the sofa, shall I? I’ll think about how I might stage your play, and even whom I might cast for the leading role. Doris— or even Monica. What’d you say? Is that what I should do, Maurice? You tell me, because I’m completely discombobulated.
MAURICE
Oh come on, Horace, don’t be like this.

MONIQUE
You are being so immature, Horace, it is incredible to watch-

HORACE
-Am I? Am I really, Monica?

DORIS
(intervenes)
Actually, I thought you gave Maurice an excellent overview of his play there, Horace. I thought it was really special, so stop being churlish and man-up.

An awkward silence.

HORACE
I don’t owe Maurice anything. Firstly he gatecrashes our dinner party, then he catches me with a sucker punch.
(to Maurice)
You’ve got some balls coming here, matey.

MAURICE
It is not my doing if Gordon calls me and tells me to come here. He told me that you were expecting me. How was I to know you were kept in the dark? You should speak to Gordon about it. It really is not my fault, Horace.

HORACE
(angrily)
I was expecting Yusimi Yusimi!

MAURICE
(chuckling)
Well, now you see me, non?

HORACE
I see you all right, Maurice.
(pause)
I see you all right.
(pause)
HORACE
And I am not going to work with you. In fact, I’d prefer it if you left immediately.

MAURICE
But this is crazy, Horace.

HORACE
Is it? So what are we going to do then, sack the director?

DORIS
Oh come on, Horace. Give him a break.

MONIQUE
I agree.

Horace climbs out of his seat and gives Maurice a deathly stare.

HORACE
I’m going upstairs now. When I come down I expect you to be gone.

DORIS
Horace?

Doris climbs out of her seat and goes to him imploringly.

MAURICE
It doesn’t matter, Doris. It is okay. I will go.

DORIS
It does matter. It matters to me. Horace?

(pause)
Horace, Come on.

Doris watches Horace as he quietly climbs the stairs to the bedroom.

MAURICE
Oh well.

DORIS
He’ll be all right in a minute or two.
MAURICE
Oh really? Because I cannot see this myself.

MONIQUE
Crazy.

Doris tries to change the mood and fills their glasses with more wine.

CUT TO

INTERCUT:

In the bedroom, Horace sits at the foot of the bed and stares at his own reflection in the mirror.
In the lounge, Doris glides over to the CD player and changes the CD to Saint Germain.

BTS

MONIQUE
(joyfully)
Oh I just want to dance! That is all I want to do tonight!

MAURICE
But what about Horace?

DORIS
Oh don’t worry, Maurice, I’ll speak to him when he’s feeling better.

MAURICE
But we all heard what he said. He will not work with me.

DORIS
It’s not up to him, Maurice. Gordon’s the one who decides on things like that. Horace is just his monkey. He thinks he’s more important than he actually is.

Monique burst into laughter.

MONIQUE
He is a monkey. That is very funny.

MAURICE
This is my play we are talking about, Monique. Please!
MONIQUE
Oh, but I just want to dance.

MAURICE
I am very concerned about this.

DORIS raises her glass and looks up towards the bedroom with scorn.

DORIS
Come in number five! Where the fuck are you!

Doris cackles.

MAURICE
He told me he was omnipotent.

DORIS
No. You mean impotent.

Doris cackles.

MAURICE
I thought it would be a good surprise for him. I cannot believe he has taken this so badly.

MONIQUE
He must really hate you.

Doris turns up the volume on the CD player, and a party atmosphere begins to take shape.

MONIQUE
I just want to dance like crazy-Whoa-!

DORIS
Me too! We won’t let him spoil our fun. The miserable old fuck-pig!

Doris cackles.

Maurice sits soberly and looks on as they dance to the music of Saint Germain.

MONIQUE
I just love this music.

DORIS
It’s brilliant!
MONIQUE
I know.

DORIS
I’m so going to let my hair down
tonight! Whoa-!

MONIQUE
Touche!

Doris stops dancing and stares at Monique questionably.

DORIS
It is over between you two, isn’t it?

MONIQUE
Completely over! Finished! Caput!
Au revoir, Horace!

DORIS
Ha! Brilliant! I love it!

Maurice climbs out of his seat and walks towards the entrance door.

MONIQUE
Maurice, where are you going?

MAURICE
I have something for Doris. I almost forgot. I left it outside the door.

He exits then returns with a portrait wrapped in brown paper.

They stop dancing immediately.

MONIQUE
What is that, Maurice?

DORIS
(excitedly)
Oh my god! Is that for me?

MAURICE
I want you to have it, Doris.

DORIS
Oh really? Oh, Maurice! Thank you! Thank you so much!

She kisses his cheek.
MAURICE

Open it. Doris rips off the wrapper to reveal her portrait. She positions it upright on the floor.

MONIQUE
It is very beautiful.

MAURICE
Merci.

DORIS
Oh thank you, Maurice. I’ll treasure it, I swear. Actually, I’ll hang it on my bedroom wall so Horace can look at me every night from now on.

Doris cackles.

MONIQUE
It is an amazing piece of art.

DORIS
What about your exhibition? I thought you said-

MAURICE
-I have changed my mind. It is yours.

DORIS
(to Monique)
He knew how much I wanted this painting.

MONIQUE
Let us dance!

Maurice joins them as they begin to dance once more.

CUT TO

BEDROOM

Horace stands up and removes his spectacles. He goes to the wardrobe.

He takes out the carved wooden box to reveal the pistol.

He aims the pistol at the mirror then loads a single bullet into the chamber.
He stares in the mirror at his own reflection for a moment.

HORACE (ASIDE)
He is the enemy of your theatre. He is hostile to your world.

He points the pistol at the mirror and begins to speak in an American accent.

HORACE (CONT’D)
Are you talkin’ to me?
(Pause)
Are you talkin’ to me, punk? Eh?
Eh? You talkin’ to me?

He turns away ashamedly and sits down on the bed.

CUT TO

LOUNGE (CONT’D)

They are in high spirits as they continue to dance.

MONIQUE
So what are we waiting for? Let’s go out!

DORIS
Yeah. All right then.

MAURICE
Do you like my outrageous suit, Doris?

DORIS
I love it, Maurice. But you do look like a pimp though.

Monique laughs aloud as she throws her arms around him. He responds by pulling her closer and kissing her neck.

MONIQUE
(provocatively)
Tu aimes ma robe, Maurice?

MAURICE
Très sexy, tu es aussi belle-

She pinches his cheek and kisses him.
MONIQUE
I want to eat you all up.

Doris cackles.

DORIS
Brilliant!

MAURICE
Je ressens quelque chose dans mon cœur pour toi. Quelque chose de spécial.

MONIQUE
Oui. Et moi aussi.

MAURICE
So what are we waiting for, let’s go!

MONIQUE
I am so happy, I want to scream!

MAURICE
Ca Dior être le destin.

MONIQUE
Quel beau destin, j’adore le destin! Le destin est magnifique! Fait moiré rêver!

MAURICE
This time I will not let you out of my sight.

DORIS
Ha! Brilliant!

Doris cackles.

DORIS
Wait here. I’ll just go and get dressed.

MAURICE
Super!

Doris takes the stairs and stops midway.

DORIS
I won’t be one minute.
MAURICE

Go!

Monique throws her arms around him as they smooch to the music.

CUT TO.

BEDROOM

Doris enters in high spirits.

She ignores him and goes straight to the wardrobe door.

DORIS

You know we’re having so much fun down there. We’re going out. D’you not want to come with us then?

Horace stares at the floor in silence.

DORIS (CONT’D)

Oh come on. It’ll be such a laugh.

He doesn’t look up as he ignores her.

DORIS (CONT’D)

Oh bleedin’ cheer up, for god sake!

She holds up the dress for him to see.

DORIS (CONT’D)

You know, you’ve got such good taste in music. Did anyone ever tell you that? I love that Saint Germain CD.

Silence.

DORIS (CONT’D)

D’you remember this dress you bought me? It’s Vivian Westwood.

Silence.

DORIS (CONT’D)

I’ll wear it just for you if you come out with us?

Silence.
DORIS CONT’D
Look it’s no good you just sitting here with your head stuck half way up your flippin’ arse, Horace.

She sighs and sits down next to him. She puts a consoling arm around him, takes the pistol from him and carefully places it down on the cabinet.

DORIS (CONT’D)
Look, why don’t you put on your velvet suit and come out with us?

Silence.

DORIS (CONT’D)
Oh come on, Horace- don’t be like this. Do it for me, please.

He looks up at her pittifully.

HORACE
I can’t. I’m finished, Doris. You don’t understand. It’s over. I’m over. I’m finished because of him.

DORIS
You’ve changed, Horace Nugents. You’ve become a stranger to me. I don’t even know my own husband anymore. You’re usually full of it.

HORACE
That worm down there has destroyed me.

DORIS
Oh Rubbish! No he has not! That’s just your paranoia at work! Deal with it for Christ sake!

HORACE
That little toe rag has destroyed me.

DORIS
Oh what! Don’t be so bloody ridiculous!
(pause)
D’ you remember what you used to say?
(pause)
You used to say forgive your enemies- nothing annoys them more.
HORACE
It wasn’t mine.

DORIS
What the hell!
(Pause)
Maurice is a nice guy—he really is. And it looks like he and Monique are going to start up their relationship again.

HORACE
I don’t care, Doris.
(Pause)
I loathe that man. In fact, I wouldn’t mind putting a bullet right through his skull.

Doris kneels down to him so she is eyeball to eyeball.

DORIS
OK. Now you listen to me, Horace Nugents. You said his play was one of the best you’ve read in a decade. Just because Maurice wrote it, you sit there like a defeatist, sulking like a spoilt bleedin’ juvenile. You are a weak man, Horace Nugents. You’ve got egg all over your face because you’ve been exposed as a pompous, self-absorbed, miserable old fuck pig. And I have just about had enough of your selfish me, me, me attitude all the soddin’ time. All you do is sit there going on about how fuckin’ great you are. Character assassinating people who don’t live up to your expectations. And d’ you wanna know something else? In all the years of our marriage, you’ve not once offered me a helping hand. How could you be so fuckin’ high and mighty about your own successes when you never gave a flying fuck about mine? My life. You’re an egotistical fuck pig, Horace Nugents, and right now I flippin’ hate you.

HORACE
It’s just that tactile slime-ball. Gordon sent him here to destroy me. He’s made himself my Nemesis.
DORIS
No. You just want to control him, like you do everyone else.
(Pause)
Why does everyone feel the tension around you, Horace?

HORACE
Leave me alone, then.

Doris climbs to her feet and slips off her denims.

DORIS (ASIDE)
I don’t why I bother.

HORACE
Well, you can have a divorce if you want?

She kicks off her denims then pins him down on the bed. She attacks him until she is completely exhausted.
Long silence.

HORACE
Now leave me alone.

DORIS
I am so ashamed of you. I should be the one sitting here with my head up my arse, not you. Your tart is down there with her ex and all you can do is run away like the flippin’ coward you are. Go down there and face them like the man I thought I married.

HORACE
OK. I will. I’ll confront him.

He climbs off the bed and picks up the pistol.

DORIS
And, Horace?

He turns towards her.

HORACE
What?

DORIS
Be calm. Please— just for me?
HORACE
Sure.

He makes his way down the stairs, as Doris slips out of her denims and puts on her dress.

CUT TO

LOUNGE

Maurice and Monique sit on the sofa talking quietly.

Horace quietly approaches with pistol in hand.

MAURICE
(to Monique)
So what happened to you after I left? I never heard anything.

MONIQUE
I went to Canada to visit my grandmother. I thought you already knew that.

MAURICE
Well, I heard something like that.

Monique spots Horace from the corner of her eye and jumps up.

MONIQUE
Oh môn dieu! Horace!

Maurice calmly climbs to his feet.

MAURICE
Horace, what are you doing with a gun?

HORACE
I aim to kill with it.

Horace aims the pistol towards him. Maurice moves away.

MAURICE
Why are you doing this?

HORACE
Because I hate you.

MAURICE
Why?
HORACE
Never mind that.
(pause)
Did you know this pistol used to belong to my great uncle Charles. He fought in the Napoleonic wars.

MAURICE
No. I never knew that.

HORACE
He killed many a frog with this mechanical device. Now put your hands up where I can see them.

Maurice puts up his hands.

MAURICE
So what are you going to do now, shoot me? After all - I am frog, non?

Monique makes for the stairs to the bedroom.

Horace calls after her.

HORACE
That’s it, Monique. Doris can’t save you.

HORACE
(to Maurice)
You’ve turned my world upside down. You’re a deceitful punk.

His hand suddenly begins to shake violently as Maurice cowers.

MAURICE
Please, Horace - don’t shoot me.

HORACE
Everything was fine before you came along. Why did you have to come here? You really should have heeded my advice and stayed away, punk.

MAURICE
I will go then. Just open the door and I will leave immediately.
HORACE
Who’s laying eggs now, punk?

BANG!!

A bullet hits the portrait flush in the center, tearing a huge hole in the canvas.

Maurice dives for cover. Horace stares at the damaged portrait.

MAURICE
DORIS! HELP ME! HELP ME DORIS, PLEASE!

Horace looks up at the bedroom.

HORACE
It’s all right, darling. I’m just about to shoot a reptile. I think he’s cowering behind the sofa, but don’t worry, I’ve got him right where I want him.

Horace stares down at him as he covers his head in fear.

MAURICE
SOMEBODY HELP ME!

HORACE
Did you enjoy my food then? Oh- and my wife?

CU: Doris and Monique watching from the top of the stairs.

MONIQUE
PLEASE STOP THIS! LEAVE HIM ALONE!

MAURICE
PLEASE, HORACE, STOP!

HORACE
Give me one good reason why I should?

Doris descends the stairs in her slinky black and gold dress.

DORIS
(to Horace)
YOU BASTARD! LOOK WHAT YOU’VE DONE TO MY FACE!
She immediately spots the portrait and knocks him down with one single punch.

Maurice shakily climbs to his feet and is joined by the caring Monique.

Doris picks up the painting and begins to sob.

Horace looks up from the floor holding his jaw.

She looks down at Horace in tears.

DORIS
What have you’ve done, you twat?
How could you do this to my portrait?

HORACE
(unrepentantly)
I was aiming at a him. I’m sorry— I missed.

MAURICE
I am not staying here a moment longer.

MONIQUE
Oh mon dieu.

MAURICE
Come on, Monique. Let’s get out of here.

Doris sticks her head inside the portrait and stands.

DORIS
Look what he’s done.

HORACE
I told you—I was aiming at him. It was an accident, Doris.

She puts the portrait down and turns to Maurice.

DORIS
Can I come with you? I can’t stay here with him.
(to Horace)
You’ve caused enough damage for one night.
MAURICE
Yes. Come with us, Doris. I would
not leave you here with this crazy
man for one second longer.

DORIS
Thank you.

MONIQUE
I am very sorry for you, Horace. I
was wrong about you. You are crazy.

They slam the door shut as they exit.

Horace picks up the pistol and loads another bullet into the chamber.

CUT TO

EXT. APARTMENT - NIGHT
CU: Maurice hailing a taxi as the women stand behind him.

The taxi pulls to a stop.

INTERCUT
Horace puts the pistol inside his mouth

They look up at the apartment before climbing into the cab.

Horace squeezes the trigger.

BANG!!

His head is blown backwards.

CU: The taxi driving off with them.

END