

PILGRIMS

Written by

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C 2016

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By Allison Fine
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1 Hour TV Drama
Pilot

OPENING SONG: DONA, DONA, TRADITIONAL YIDDISH SONG SUNG BY
WOLF KRAKOWSKI

Log line: Motley group of characters in various stages and ages of life, disillusionment and burnout find themselves charged with rebuilding their lives in a post-apocalyptic America of the 21st century. They begin with a cafe called *A Bi Gezunt. (It Could Always Be Worse)*. The establishment of a new order is imperative if they are to survive, but secrets abound that threaten to tear their tribal family apart. Like *Casablanca*, these are people trapped in one place due to circumstances beyond their control.

LIST OF MAJOR CHARACTERS:

ALEINA OSTROVSKY: 60-something. Once a film actress now a tough survivor. She married Charlie (his funeral opens the first segment) and quit acting when the infrastructure disintegrated. Singer, entrepreneur, she now runs the Cafe/Bookstore Charlie left her. Unbeknownst to anyone, including her son Ben, Ben is the child of Micky Alberstein, although he thinks he is Charlie's son.

BEN SPARKS: 40-something. Handsome, smart, burnt out. Aleina's son. Micky knows Ben is his son but there is an agreement to let him think Charlie was his father. Left home 20 years ago but came back for Charlie's funeral. He worked as a successful journalist for 20 years but all the newspapers, Internet and TV outlets have collapsed. He is lost.

CHARLIE SPARKS: Aleina's dead husband.

MICKY ALBERSTEIN: 60-something. Lover of Aleina. Biological father to Ben. Once a successful TV/Film director now a contraband dealer/stealer trading whatever he can get for himself and others. He was once a double agent for the Tribal Triad, the only group that has the last remaining stash of oil. No one knows for sure whose side he is on. Aleina doesn't care.

VAN: 40-something, African-American, friend of BEN--along for the ride. He may be a double agent for the Tribal Triad, the only group that has the last remaining stash of oil. No one knows for sure whose side he is on. Aleina doesn't care. He has implanted in his forehead a "camera implant" that takes pictures continuously of everything he sees and hears.

SUSAN: 30-something--Hispanic, originally from Puerto Rico. Joins the group to help rebuild.

NATELLA LISOFF, "BLUE": 19. An orphan, a waif, parents died during the Resolution. Born and raised in Russia, she was dumped here in The City at age 12 by people who left her to fend for herself. She will survive no matter what. Cunning, with talent and beauty that she is not completely aware of.

ISRAEL POSNER: 70+. Worked in the film business as cinematographer for many years. Produced propaganda for the Resolution, produced shows for a group called New Wave. He has a "Camera Implant" he stole in the early days before anything worth anything was ravaged. The implant takes pictures once an hour of everything he sees. Unknown to him, the Tribal Triad has hooked into his implant and can upload every picture he takes. He is an unwitting spy.

AAGI: Indeterminate age. She's posing as a witch, doing "readings" etc in exchange for whatever she needs, but in her former life she was a doctor (neurologist) and a scientist doing research into Artificial Intelligence and Genetic Code.

MARNIE: Thirty-something. Writer. Ad hoc vender in Valentine Rush marketplace. Love interest of BEN SPARKS.

GARIBALDI: Origins unknown. A Putin-like dictator of a large group of world-wide Oil usurpers called The Triad. He is a transgender female to male. Only his assistant Johanna and one or two other people are aware of this. A female actor should play Garabaldi.

JOHANNA: Middle Eastern origins, beautiful, exotic looking and very deadly. 25, 2nd assistant to Garibaldi, spying for Garibaldi at the cafe, love interest of Ben's, rival of Marnie.

MARNIE: Early thirties. Stall owner in the Marketplace and friend of Ben's. Middle Eastern in origin--possibly from the Middle East Confederation, formerly Iraq, Jordan, Israel, Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia.

VASI: Old timer in his 80's. Still hanging on. Remembers everything. Wish he could forget.

LOUIS: African American. 60-something. Former Political operative and army Captain. At loose ends in this new playing field.

ALLAT: Another one of Ben's many love interests. From Afghanistan, she is at odds with Johanna and doesn't trust her.

Time: 2050

Place: some place in N. America: a destroyed, once-beautiful city, now tarnished by war and global warming

Opening Montage: THEME MUSIC PLAYS:

EXT./INT.CITY - DAY

1. MICKY walks down a deserted street in the City, which is decimated buildings, trashed cars and everything in various stages of dismantlement and decay. Sidewalks are crumbling, buildings empty and abandoned, a FERAL DOG approaches him SNARLING. MICKY picks up a large board, throws it at the dog and SHOUTS "Fuck off!"

2. AERIAL SHOT of CITY: Appears from the air as if hit by a bomb. Nothing is in pristine condition

3. CLOSE UP: Rats scurrying around buildings, papers flying, a MAN sleeps on a pile of trash.

4. EXT. - HOSPITAL - people LYING sick and dead on the steps leading to front door. Dying people block the door.

5. INT. - HOSPITAL - Piles of the dead on floor, hallways, rooms. Two doctors service thousands.

(For reference: the name of the Cafe A Bi Gezunt is Yiddish for: "It Could Always Be Worse.")

BEGIN TEASER:

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

CLOSE UP: ALEINA OSTROVSKY'S FACE

ALEINA OSTROVSKY: Maybe she is in her late 60's but she doesn't acknowledge it. With a life of tough knocks, she still exudes a dogged persistence to move forward and survive.

She stands in a long line of people at the cemetery. At the head of the line is JOHN MAITLIN, an official wearing a white robe over a black suit.

Aleina waits to receive an Urn from the John Maitlin, standing in front of a huge ditch which is the Mass Grave.

The gaping hole holds 100+ bodies wrapped in muslin. There are eighty people in line to receive the Symbolic Urn. A short service has just completed.

A WOMAN'S VOICE SINGS A CAPELLA: "Gorm" (by Susan McKeown)

The Urn contains nothing--it is small, awkwardly made of clay, symbolic of the deceased.

The line of mourners approaches John Maitlin, who stands next to a sign proclaiming: MINISTER OF TRANSITION. Each person shakes his hand and receives the Urn.

The SOUND of MURMURS, MUFFLED LAUGHS, CHATTER and TEARS as the line moves along.

JOHN MAITLIN

This Urn is symbolic of your loved one. His or Her body will be buried alongside his or her compatriots. May your loved ones live and reside in Peace. Sat Chit Ananda.

As John speaks he bows slightly and the receiver does the same in response. Aleina comes up, grabbing the Urn from his hands.

ALEINA

Fuck you.

JOHN MAITLIN

This Urn is symbolic of your loved one. His/Her body will be buried alongside his or her compatriots. May your loved one--

ALEINA

Don't bother me with that shit.

JOHN MAITLIN

Chit--not shit.

ALEINA

Oh shut the fuck up.

Aleina wearing a long, purple Kimono over a pair of ragged jeans and a long man's T-shirt. She snarls at John who looks at her for a moment, smiling and bowing.

JOHN MAITLIN

You are our Guest. May your loved one and reside in Peace.

ALEINA
Peace up your Ass.

Aleina stomps off, discarding her Kimono and leaving it on the ground. As she reaches the edge of the cemetery she throws the Urn into the bushes.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Aleina walks up the street, turning on a side street. She steps over decimated cars and trash to a small house boarded up. A sign nailed across the door: CONDEMNED.

With some effort Aleina pries the sign off and throws it out into the street. In the front of the house are tires, car parts, a couch, a dead TV. Several dogs are fighting over a dead cat.

ALEINA
Shoo!

The dogs look up and go back to their fight over the cat. Pushing open the front door she walks into a disaster with broken windows, boards and beams falling. One of the dogs follows her inside, she swats him with a board and he leaves.

ALEINA (CONT'D)
Shit, you fucker! This is what you
leave me?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A BI GEZUNT CAFE - DAY

A sign in front in wobbly letters proclaims:

"A Bi Gezunt. Cafe. Bookstore. What You Take is What You
Make. All Welcome."

INT. CAFE - DAY

The cafe and bookstore is partially finished. People are hammering and fixing. Aleina walks around observing the tables. There is a small stage with an old upright piano and a partial drum set. Books are piled everywhere. Bookcases are filled to the brim with books. There is a small kitchen behind the stage.

MICKY and ROBERT, two men in their 50's are seated at a table playing cards.

Aleina walks to the stage and shouts.

ALEINA

Testing. Testing. You will wake up soon.

A laugh. In walks BEN SPARKS. 40-something. Aleina's son. He is wearing a white summer suit, red tie and a royal blue shirt. His shoes are blue suede. He's sporting a straw Fedora cocked sideways. He tips his hat at MICKY and VAN.

MICKY

Siddown kid!

BEN

Drink first! Mom! Got the whiskey going yet?

ALEINA

The bar is not open, and my delivery bike is--who knows? I got Vodka and tomato juice.

BEN

How old is the Vodka? Is it from before the Resolution?

VAN

Beggars can't be choosers.

MICKY

Siddown.

BEN

You boys look like hell. You up to something?

VAN

Yeah, we're up to nothing but we make it look important.

MICKY

And you? Dressed for a ball of something?

VAN

How in hell do you get clothes like that?

BEN

I find'em.

VAN
Who you trying to impress?

BEN
Nobody. I just like looking good.

Aleina walks over and gives each one a hug and kiss. Special one for her son.

ALEINA
Hey--boys, I got a new girl!

MICKY
Oooh, I like girls.

Ben sits at the table and grabs the cards from Van and begins to shuffle.

BEN
Me too.

VAN
Where is she?

MICKY
Who is she?

ALEINA
A kid. Wandered in the other day looking for work. No family. No home.

MICKY
Like everybody

ALEINA
She's cute. We need somebody cute in here.

As Aleina speaks NATELLA walks in. She is 19 but looks younger. She has charisma but lacks self confidence. She wears a short black skirt, fishnet tights with holes in them, a pair of scuffed-up boots, tight sweater and a jeans jacket that's seen better days. Her dark hair is piled up in a beehive with strands hanging down.

ALEINA (CONT'D)
So this is it--the fabulous ones.
The nuts and bolts of A Bi Gezunt.

BEN
Leave off the bolts, we're just nuts.

MICKY
Speak for yourself.

BEN
I'm speaking for you, actually.

MICKY
I ain't no nut.

VAN
You're certifiable. Shut up. We all
are.

MICKY
Survivors.

ALEINA
Survivors rock this place. Natella,
go grab that tomato juice and Vodka
from the kitchen.

BEN
Mom, she's an orphan.

ALEINA
And?

MICKY
We're all orphans here, kid,
nothing left but thieves and crooks
and killers.

ALEINA
And us.

MICKY
We're the thieves and crooks.

ALEINA
But not killers, right?

ALL:
Right!

Micky opens his jacket to reveal a gun tucked inside. Van notices, Ben is busy looking at the kitchen where Natella returns with 2 bottles of Vodka, a large jar of tomato juice and 5 glasses. Aleina pours and they all grab a glass.

ALEINA
Gentlemen and Gentlewomen: A Bi
Gezunt!

BEN
It could always be worse!

They drink.

MUSIC UP: THEME
SONG

END TEASER

SEASON 1 Episode 1

"BEFORE THEY FELL"

INT. DAY - A BI GEZUNT/CAFE-BOOKSTORE - DAY

MUSIC UP: FATHER
AND SON
(YIDDISH)

The Bookstore portion of A Bi Gezunt is a repository of all the books no one can keep or wants. Books are piled to the ceiling, on bookcases, tables, shelves etc. It is a room full of unwanted books. The store doesn't sell anything because there is no money and no one wants to trade anything for a book. Occasionally a wandering stranger comes in with more books. Sometimes someone will trade a piece of clothing for a book. Most often people wander in, eat, read and wander out. The cafe portion is tables, stage, piano, several long tables with chairs.

Micky is seated at a long wooden table playing chess with 2 other cronies: VASELIN KRESMER (VASI) 89 years young, and LOUIS TOPOLOV, 70. VASI is skinny, kept alive by Vodka, sardines and pickled herring. They are the has-beens of the Final Resolution. They get their support from Micky and the contraband operation he runs out of A Bi Gezunt.

INT. - A BI GEZUNT - MAGIC HOUR

Micky, Vasi and Louis at the table looking over the game Vasi and Louis are playing. An open bottle of Vodka and each has a smudged dirty glass filled at the elbow. Looks like a scene from *Crime and Punishment*.

MUSIC UP:
NATELLA IS ON
THE STAGE

PLAYING GUITAR
AND SINGING A
SONG IN GAELIC

MICKY

We lost the war--you noticed?

VASI

You can't fucking play chess, ya
know that kid?

MICKY

You calling me kid?

VASI

To me, everybody's a kid.

LOUIS

89 and feeling fine, eh?

VASI

Play the game--

LOUIS

He's annihilating you, Vasi.

MICKY

Move.

VASI

Yeah, yeah, I'm thinking.

LOUIS

Where's Van? He plays better than
you alls.

VASI

Ben plays better'n all of us.

MICKY

(proud)

True.

LOUIS

Your chess is deteriorating, bub.
You know what Bobby Fischer said!

MICKY

Who the fuck's that?

LOUIS

Only the greatest chess player
ever.

VASI
Ever? What ever? What century?

LOUIS
20th.

VASI
Forgeddaboutit.

MICKY
Who cares?

LOUIS
"Those who don't know history are
condemned to repeat it."

MICKY
Who said that?

VASI
Bobby Fischer didn't say that.

LOUIS
Some old guy from Greece.

VASI
Bullshit anyway. Who cares who said
what? Whaddawe care about the past
anyway? It's dead, dead, dead as a
doornail.

MICKY
How're doornails dead, will you
explain me that?

VASI
Aw--make a move.

MICKY
It's YOUR move asshole.

LOUIS
Bobby Fischer said you gotta be in
top condition. Your chess goes bad
when your body deteriorates! So
it's like--synchronistic or
something.

VASI moves a piece.

MICKY
Body and mind.

VAS

Deep.

LOUIS

Ok Ok.

MICKY

Our bodies are wrecked, so what're you gonna do? Our bodies keep playing even if we can't.

VASI

What do you mean?

MICKY

Never mind. I can't explain. It's existential.

VASI

Why you keep using big words?

LOUIS

What's keeping YOU alive Vasi?

VASI

Anchovies, pickled herring and this crappy Vodka Aleina serves.

MICKY

You complaining?

MICKY moves a piece.

MICKY (CONT'D)

Checkmate my friend.

All three men laugh and drink.

VASI

This is a stupid game anyway.

MICKY

No, you're stupid, my friend. This is a smart game.

LOUIS

Don't be too hard on him. He's gonna be dead soon anyway.

MICKY

That's right. To your death, my friend.

VASI
(laughs)
You're right! To my death!

LOUIS
Remember the Resolution!

VASI
Do I remember? I remember the whole
damn thing and before the
Resolution too.

MICKY
Yeah?

VASI
Aw..you're too young to understand.
We had hope then. We'd take to the
streets. "Be it resolved that Earth
has reached the tipping point.
Government services are no longer
available and no longer required.
Too many people and too little
resources. We release you to your
own destiny.."

MICKY
The last Broadcast.

VASI
On Network TV.

MICKY
You memorized that?

VASI
I wrote it. President Webber hired
me to write his speeches. Then
everything went kaplooie.

LOUIS
Police beat you guys down right?

VASI
Earlier. Only when we went after
the dipshits and tried to raid the
store houses, but they couldn't
stop us though. We had to survive!
There was nothing! Nothing!

Silence. Aagi walks in and approaches the table.

AAGI

We need more nails. We're out of nails.

VASI

Nails?

AAGI

Boards, nails, wood, stuff--we have a lot more building to do. We women are doing all the work!

VASI

And? I'm an old man!

AAGI

(to Micky)

What about you?

MICKY

What?

AAGI

You guys sit--you play games--you talk nonsense--get to work!

MICKY

Do you run this place?

AAGI

We all run this place!

MICKY

Aleina's in charge.

AAGI

Yeah--she sent me over here. Micky, get us some supplies STAT.

MICKY

OK. In a minute. Can you fix us something to eat?

AAGI

Fix it yourself.

She walks away.

MICKY

She's nasty.

VASI

She wouldn't be bad looking if she'd clean herself up.

MICKY

Meh. We got no water. Much. Gotta haul some from that well I spotted.

VASI

There's some cisterns on the side of that building over there. Then there's the giant cistern that fed the whole town at one time.

BEN

How we gonna empty that thing? Somebody has to climb up and siphon it off with a giant hose or something.

VASI

That's a big project kid--for another day.

MICKY

Really?

LOUIS

We got nothing.

MICKY

Don't get discouraged.

VASI

You have no idea what nothing really is, kids.

LOUIS

They ghettoized us and cut off our supplies. I was a kid but I remember it. We ran outta stuff pretty bad. They kept it for themselves.

VASI

The Triad. Still do.

LOUIS

What do we do?

MICKY

I'm going to get some nails and supplies and check those cisterns out.

LOUIS

They been emptied long ago.

VASI

Boys, the best revenge is a life well lived. Nobody had nothing when the oil ran out. PFFFT..it was done for everybody, including them.

LOUIS

'Cept Garibaldi keeps a stash.

MICKY

Yeah fuck them--they're the only people driving around now ain't they?

LOUIS

We'll kill'em.

MICKY

How you gonna do that?

LOUIS

I'd like to see those selfish ass fuckers deader than a door nail.

They all laugh.

MICKY

(raising his glass)
To doornails!

EXT. DAY - CITY, WHAT WAS ONCE WASHINGTON D.C.

LAZLO, Triad assistant, dressed in a fancy, 3-piece suit stands in front of what was once a Museum, now a repository for dead bodies, with JOHANNA. A MAN, JUNIOR, walks up, wearing clothes salvaged from various places.

LAZLO

You look like shit.

JOHANNA

We need to download his pics.

LAZLO

I know what to do, Johanna. Keep your mouth shut.

JOHANNA

I'm only saying.

LAZLO
Who's in charge here?

JOHANNA
You are.

LAZLO
Good. Let's remember that. Now.
JUNIOR. We need to download those
pics.

JUNIOR
Where? Last time I had a headache
for a week.

JOHANNA
I got you some contraband
medication.

JUNIOR
What?

JOHANNA
Xanax, Celexa, Lexapro, Luvox,
Prozac, Cymbalta, Sinequan,
Wellbutrin and Nardil.

JUNIOR
Jesus. That shit's gonna kill me!

LAZLO
Johanna, that stuff is for the
other guys--depression, anxiety--
bipolar you know?

JUNIOR
PTSD for Christ's sake.

JOHANNA
Look--I got all kinds of shit.
Codeine if it comes to that.

JUNIOR
We're wasting time here. Garabaldi
is expecting us back at the office.

He whistles and a Humvee pulls up. They get in.

INT.DAY - TRIAD HEADQUARTERS

INT. OFFICE -DAY

High up in a remaining skyscraper just outside of The City. The decor is ultra modern with lot's of black and chrome.

We see the back of GARIBALDI's head as he looks out the enormous picture window showing the destroyed aftermath of the dismantled City. Camera lingers on the mess for a moment.

Garibaldi is trans/gender: female to male.

She/He swivels his chair around and we see Garibaldi full frontal. She/He is light brown skinned with thick hair, a shock of white in the front, combed back and flowing down slightly past his collar. He wears a very expensive (man's)suit and looks professional, sinister and smartly mysterious.

GARIBALDI
(top of his lungs)
Lazlo! Johanna! Get in here!

Lazlo and Johanna enter.

GARIBALDI (CONT'D)
(pointing to a large screen
on the wall across from
his desk)
Where are these pictures coming
from?

Johanna and Lazlo look as Instagram pictures from an implant flash across the screen at breakneck speed.

GARIBALDI (CONT'D)
Hmm?

LAZLO
The color is spectacular and the
resolution--

GARIBALDI
I don't give a shit about the
resolution you idiot! These
pictures don't belong to one of our
people!

JOHANNA
We have a rogue out there.

GARIBALDI
No doubt.

LAZLO

What can we do about it? We downloaded from Junior's implant.

GARABALDI

This isn't his. He's hiding something. Bring him in here.

JOHANNA

He's gone.

GARABALDI

What?

JOHANNA

We dropped him back at the--the--

GARABALDI

The what smart stuff?

JOHANNA

Helicopter took him to the Midwest-- you know, per your instructions Garabaldi. He's our plant. El Bi Gezunteit or something.

LAZLO

A BI Gezunt--it's the cafe and bookstore that woman started.

GARABALDI

Who? What woman? That Aagi witch?

LAZLO

No, no, that--Charlie's wife.

GARABALDI

Charlie! We killed Charlie!

LAZLO

Yeah but his wife is still alive.

GARABALDI

All right. Well, we have to bring them all in. We have to bring them in, and find out what they've got. Confiscate this implant.

LAZLO

A rogue? How could a rogue possibly get an implant?

JOHANNA

On the black market, genius.
They're around.

GARIBALDI

One of you is going to infiltrate
and bring the assholes in.

LAZLO

You can find him?

JOHANNA

Or her, you know it could be--

GARIBALDI

I don't give a rat's ass what sex
this rogue is, stupids--one of you
has to bring him or her in. We need
to get the implant and get rid of
him. Or her.

LAZLO

So where?

GARIBALDI

We've got tracking, Lazlo,
remember? Go to that Cafe or
something.

He pushes a couple of buttons on his desk and a tracking map
device pulls up a map on the screen, which gradually narrows
to a close up Missouri.

LAZLO

Missouri?

GARIBALDI

You ever been there?

LAZLO

No--

JOHANNA

I drove through there once. When we
had a car.

GARIBALDI

Johanna, you're going.

JOHANNA

I can't wear this, Garibaldi!
They'll know me for a member of the
Triad! I'll have to get some shitty
clothes or something.

LAZLO

That's the least of your worries,
doll.

GARIBALDI

They don't even have fucking TV's
there! But whatever. Get yourself
some dirty, crappy cloth at the
free market and tear yourself an
outfit. I'll get you transport to
Missouri.

Lazlo and Johanna start to leave.

GARABALDI

Johanna. Stay here a minute.

Lazlo exits, with a small smirk back over his shoulder.

Johanna approaches Garibaldi. Totally different demeanor now--
seductive.

JOHANNA

Yes, my Mister Master?

GARABALDI

Shut up.

JOHANNA

I know what you want for that itty
bitty bad mood of yours.

She puts her arms around her/his back and kisses him
passionately.

JOHANNA (CONT'D)

Better?

GARABALDI

Better.

JOHANNA

Good. We aim to serve.

GARABALDI

Shut up. Better not screw up in
Missouri.

JOHANNA

Not enough to screw up with there,
I reckon.

Garibaldi nods. They kiss again.

INT.DAY - A BI GEZUNT

The inside of the cafe is now somewhat done, decorated in "neo-despair." Looks as if it were left over from a Russian cavern in a Dostoevsky novel. Moscow 1866 meets post-modern hi-tech den of thieves.

Flat screens (four of them) blare out from four corners of the room, but all that is available are movies from the past 200 years, endless stream of aerial shots of a decimated landscape, old documentaries depicting the "Catastrophic Collapse" of civilization due to climate change, docs on the disappearing rain forest, instructional videos on how to wear Oxygen masks for the decreasing Oxygen and increasing Carbon Dioxide etc etc etc. Occasionally a sit com or drama program from the late 20th, early 21st century will come on and people will stop what they are doing to watch in fascination.

Aleina sits at the piano on the small stage picking out a tune and singing softly to herself. People seated in cafe are downtrodden, poor, homeless, on the make and some just bored and drunk.

Ben is seated at a table playing solitaire. Blue, wearing faded jeans and a well-worn man's sweater saunters over to his table.

BLUE
Hey--I'm Blue.

BEN
What's your real name?

BLUE
Natella.

BEN
Ok.

BLUE
Can I sit here?

BEN
Whatever.

Blue sits.

BLUE
So--I'm off. Aleina sent me on a bartering errand into Valentine Rush.

BEN
That's a terrible section. Be careful.

BLUE
I will.

BEN
What do you got?

BLUE
(looks into her satchel)
Oh--some apples, some grapefruits,
some dope--

BEN
Be careful. Fruit is hard to come by. There're a lot of thieves around.

BLUE
I know. There're thieves everywhere.

BEN
Including here.

BLUE
Yeah.

BEN
So--you going are staying?

BLUE
You wanna go with me? For protection.

BEN
N-O.

BLUE
Okay. Just thought I'd ask.

Ben picks the cards up, shuffles and slaps cards down on the table.

BEN
You're young to be hanging out here.

BLUE
I know. But this is my home now.

BEN
Where's your family?

BLUE
Dead.

BEN
Aleina's my mom.

BLUE
I know that.

BEN
She's family oriented. You know her motto is "family is where when you have no place to go they have to take you in." But I see limits to that philosophy.

BLUE
Who said that?

BEN
Robert Frost.

BLUE
How do you know that?

BEN
I went to College.

BLUE
You did? How'd you do that? There are only 3 colleges left in the whole world! Which one?

BEN
I was home schooled.

BLUE
Aw--that's a lie.

BEN
I may be many things but a liar I am not.

BLUE
What was your major?

BEN
Linguistics and Philosophy.

BLUE
Really practical.

BEN

No shit.

BLUE

So tell me something, Ben Sparks.

BEN

Why?

BLUE

Why not?

BEN

You better get along with your stash.

BLUE

(getting up)

Ok. But this conversation isn't over.

Ben starts his solitaire game and ignores her until she leaves. One of the TV's is playing an old DVD:

SOUND BYTE:

The social revolution had been crushed. It was hard for citizens to stay alive when no one knew where the food was or whether they had a place to sleep in. And no one could really get out of where they were to travel to better locations because there was no oil, no transportation and no communication services. The governments of several large conglomerate countries, The United Federation of Europe and Asia, the United States and South American Alliance and the Third World National Reserve were unable to help their individual citizens. Million--Billions died. They had not one ounce of sympathy with the workings of establishing a practical order. In time, they too, all collapsed. It is now up to us--

BEN

MOM! Turn this damn thing off!

Aleina stops playing, goes to the large screen and switches it off. Blue comes back, hanging around the edges of the doorway, watching Ben. She starts to go back in, thinks better of it,

turns away, then comes back, hesitates, then walks over to his table.

BLUE

Ben--

BEN

Oh Jesus.

BLUE

I just wanna know--

BEN

What?

BLUE

The truth.

ALEINA(O.S.)

Where are those repair guys!

BEN

Blue, I don't owe you anything. Especially not information. You know these days there isn't shit. The only thing worth anything is information. Capiche?

BLUE

I know some thing. You, your dad--

BEN

What ever you know, forget it.

BLUE

Why?

BEN

How old are you?

BLUE

Nineteen.

BEN

Four year old's ask endless questions.

BLUE

You're kinda young to be here, too. Most of these guys are ancient.

BEN

So what? You're a child. What're you doing here?

BLUE

I got here. The Social Revolution is still a possibility.

BEN

Oh right. And oil is making a comeback. Wake up, child. The social revolution has been crushed. It's the selfish gene, baby-- replicate, keep alive, find food, sleep somewhere--no way out cause no way to get there. Got it?

BLUE

I don't need a lecture.

BEN

Didn't mom send you out?

BLUE

I know, yes. I'm going. I just want to finish this conversation.

BEN

Conversations don't finish idiot. You are such a child.

BLUE

I'm not.

BEN

Garibaldi is the government for the rich and mean. There's no assistance from any quarter--it's make for yourself any way you can-- that's the motto. Make For Yourself. Nobody gives a damn about the workings of a practical order. Now don't you have a job to do? Go barter.

BLUE

I didn't sit down here for a lecture. I'm not in college. Keep your propaganda rhetoric for somebody who gives a shit.

BEN

(softening)
Okay.

BLUE

So how did you-- like graduate from college? I mean, do you have a BA or something?

BEN

Oh come on, Jesus. Mom gave me a certificate. It would've meant something forty years ago. I became a Journalist. Now it's a fucking piece of paper I got somewhere in a suitcase. I got a Masters though.

BLUE

Where?

BEN

University of Green Ocean,
Reykjavik.

BLUE

Linguistics?

BEN

Yup.

BLUE

What the fuck is that?

BEN

Last question. Then you fucking leave, all right?

Blue nods.

BEN (CONT'D)

Ideas and thoughts are codependent on language. Language form, language meaning and language context. How we think, individually and collectively, is who we are.

BLUE

That's kinda boring.

BEN

You're stupid.

BLUE

Yeah. But I got some assets. My body is my language.

BEN

I know and everybody around here's
been speaking it.

BLUE

Not everyone.

MUSIC UP: BRUCE
COCKBURN "NUDE
DESCENDING A
STAIRCASE"

EXT. DAY - MARKETPLACE

CLOSE UP:

SIGN: VALENTINE RUSH : BUY, SELL, TRADE, BARTER

The market, as such, is an ad hoc motley conglomeration of tables filled with junk from the last 50 years, most of it useless. Clothing is hanging everywhere. There are stalls with food, both ready made and grown, for sale. It looks like a market from an 18th century Dickens novel. Sellers are yelling and hawking their product, people in various states of dress and decay are wandering around with large packs on their back filled with things they wish to trade. It is ugly, it is dirty, it is filled with thieves and sellers and hawkers and people wandering.

Blue carries two large cases filled to the brim with produce and other things. She looks at a paper with instructions for which booths and venders to approach. As she goes up to one booth, a bunch of young boys dressed in tattered military gear from 20 years ago and covered with tatoos yell and whistle at her. She ignores them. She approaches a booth where a middle-aged man, STUART, and a very large woman, DIANA, are attempting to sell or trade greens, vegetables and fruit.

JOHANNA, disguised as a street vender, wearing motley ragged clothing, a cap on her head disguising her long hair, big black combat boots and the ubiquitous back pack all buyers and sellers wear, is stalking the market. She sees BLUE and follows her surreptitiously.

BLUE

Hi. Are you Geoffrey and Stuart?

DIANA

Do I look like Stuart to you?

BLUE

No. I--

DIANA

(reaching over the stall to
shake her hand)

I'm Diana. You?

BLUE

Blue. I'm at A Bi Gezunt. Aleina
told me to--

DIANA

Yeah--we know Aleina, right, Geoff?

GEOFFREY

Yup. What does she want?

BLUE

All the produce you got.

CHYRON: "KAM MIT TSORES" = "BARELY MADE IT"

EXT. STREET - DAY

Micky walks down a deserted side street. It is bitter cold, rainy; late November. Trash is piled up as high as a 3-story building. Shop signs are in Russian, Chinese, Yiddish, Spanish; English. He stops in front of Aleina's Cafe "A Bi Gezunt," walks in, surveys the rubble and entropy, then takes a seat at a 3 legged table toward the back.

Blue comes from the back dressed in her usual provocative gear: black beehive hair, blood red lipstick, dark red scarf draped over short black skirt, fishnet tights with holes in them.

They look at one another. From his POV he sees fresh meat for the taking, from her POV she sees old meat to be avoided.

On stage are a mandolin and guitar player and Vasi is singing an old song from somewhere in his past. Focus on Vasi singing for a few minutes then swing to Micky and Blue.

VASI

(singing)

This morning at 8 am I open my
door.

The floors are wood and they
squeak.

(MORE)

VASI (CONT'D)

Outside my door stands a woman
dressed to clean the stove in
Poltava, Ukraine, 1875.
Persecution and Russification have
done its duty on her face.
Around her head she has twisted an
ugly, dirty printed cotton schmatta
some call a scarf.
She may have been shot.
I think it might be a head wound.
You can never be sure about these
things.

MICKY

(looking back at stage)
That's a happy song. My
usual.

BLUE

So, what's your usual?

MICKY

(shouting to Aleina)
Aleina! What's my usual!

Aleina stops, answers and resumes playing.

MICKY (CONT'D)

Vodka tonic!

BLUE

I'm not sure if we--

MICKY

In the back, behind the fridge.

BLUE

Ok.

MICKY

Ask the proprietor.

BLUE

Proprietor!

MICKY

Haha. She's cheeky.

BLUE

I thought we were out of Vodka. The
bikes were stopped at the border.

Aleina stops playing, goes to the back and returns with a glass of Vodka tonic, ice tinkling. One for her and one for Micky.

MICKY

Thanks boss.

ALEINA

Boose to you.

MICKY

As in--Ca-boose?

ALEINA

Yeah sure, whatever.

MICKY

What border she talking about?

ALEINA

How should I know? Border of the Republic of Canada I suppose.

MICKY

They're not a Republic anymore, dear, they're part of the Glacial Conglomerate.

ALEINA

I knew that.

MICKY

You did not. Get me some MacAllan.

BLUE

If it's imported, we don't have it.

MICKY

You gotta barter for this shit, Aleina, you know that.

BLUE

We know.

MICKY

Shut up. I'm not talking to you.

ALEINA

You shut up! You don't waltz in here and talk to her like that! Or anyone for that matter.

MICKY
 (truly humble)
 I'm sorry. I've been
 traveling for weeks,
 sleeping outside. I'm in
 a bad mood.

BLUE
 If you want MacAllan you gotta
 barter for that shit.

MICKY
 I know that, my child.

MUSIC UP: NEIL
 YOUNG "WALK WITH
 ME"

BLUE
 I'm not--

MICKY
 Hey--where's that music coming
 from?

ALEINA
 Old digital phone we jump started
 and some speakers.

MICKY
 You? In the old days you couldn't
 fix your make up.

ALEINA
 Haha. Ben did it.

MICKY
 Ben? My Ben?

ALEINA
 Hah. He ain't your Ben, dude.

MICKY
 Well--I--

ALEINA
 Never mind--
 (pointing to Blue)

MICKY
 Oh. Gotcha.

ALEINA

Micky--you are not people-ready.
Come into the back with me and
let's discuss. Leave my girl alone.

Micky gets up and follows Aleina toward the living quarters behind the kitchen.

BLUE

I know how to barter!

Micky gives her the finger.

BLUE (CONT'D)

What an asshole.

EXT. DAY - KITCHEN

The kitchen is ad hoc. Pots and pans and dishes strewn everywhere. An enormous steel table holds a plethora of kitchen paraphernalia pilfered. The stove is a huge old gas stove and there is a non-working microwave.

MICKY

Can you get that 'wave working?

ALEINA

Yeah--if we had electricity
asshole. Where you're coming from--

MICKY

No, just asking. I could maybe
figure out--

ALEINA

Generator's gone. Forget it.

MICKY

OK.

ALEINA

Ok.

They stare in silence at one another for some moments.

ALEINA (CONT'D)

Why you back?

MICKY

Why's Aagi here?

ALEINA

Never mind that.

MICKY
Got any MacAllan?

ALEINA
You're kidding, right? If it's
imported, fuck that. Come on. Only
Garbaldi and those jerks can get
imported shit.

MICKY
What the fuck you have?

ALEINA
Vodka. Wine.

She pulls a bottle of indeterminate red wine off shelf and
pours two glasses.

ALEINA (CONT'D)
Here.

They clink glasses wordlessly and drink.

MICKY
Domestic?

ALEINA
Piss from a cow--how should I know?

MICKY
It's probably that shit from
Kerhonken. Gimme the bottle.

ALEINA
That's for customers!

MICKY
(exploding)
Oh yeah that's real. All you got
here are freeloaders and losers.

ALEINA
Some people pay with sweat equity.

MICKY
Ben? Does he pay?

She is silent. She hands him the bottle.

ALEINA
Drink from the bottle if you want.

MICKY

Nah--with a glass. I don't like putting my lips to the neck of a bottle--I'd rather put them to the neck of that--

ALEINA

Shut up.

MICKY

More?

ALEINA

Hid two bottles in the toilet behind the flush mechanism.

MICKY

The flush mechanism. That's what this place is--flush--smell. Speaking of--what about waste?

ALEINA

Dump. Wheelbarrow it out back.

MICKY

Yuck.

ALEINA

Yeah.

MICKY

So--is she retarded?

ALEINA

Who? Blue? Nah--she has hyper sexual disorder.

MICKY

She wants sex with everybody.

ALEINA

I'm curing her.

MICKY

That's disappointing.

ALEINA

She couldn't hold a real job--

MICKY

So what's the cure?

She nods and smiles.

BLACK OUT

LIGHT UP

EXT. DAY- HOSPITAL/CITY

Flashback:

V.O.FEMALE JOURNALIST

30,000 people died in the last week of Marburg and Hanta Viruses and a recent Ebola outbreak. In New Bedford, MASS we have chaos as the hospital simply cannot contain the numbers of patients crawling through the doors and the medicine and space are at a premium.

A female doctor is standing on the steps of the hospital which is strewn with bodies.

FEMALE DOCTOR

We don't have medication for all these people and anyway, we don't have the bed space. None of the dead seem to have identification and there is no way to inform family and concerned relatives.

INT.DAY - HOSPITAL

Camera follows another female doctor as they walk through corridors. Dying and the dead are strewn on the floor, on gurneys and in rooms.

FEMALE DOCTOR

Medical insurance is only for the rich or government officials. The average citizen faces an unattended death if he or she contracts any sort of life-threatening illness and these days it is viruses. We simply don't have doctors, facilities or rooms.

JOURNALIST

Where are all the doctors?

FEMALE DOCTOR

I'm one of the few left. Doctors being trained here are fleeing to outposts where they are safe and can actually treat patients in a timely manner.

JOURNALIST

Where are those places?

FEMALE DOCTOR

I can't say.

INT.NIGHT - A BI GEZUNT

Micky, is asleep at the table. There are 2 empty bottles of wine and an overturned glass. The place is empty except for AAGI who is silently sweeping the floor.

AAGI

So get up already. It's the middle of the night.

MICKY

Uh?

AAGI

Would you mind? I gotta sweep under there?

MICKY

Oh. Uh?

AAGI

Get up!

Micky slowly gets up, blinks his eyes, trying to remember where he is.

MICKY

I forgot where I was. I thought I was still--

AAGI

Never mind. I done wanna hear your story. I've heard'em all.

MICKY

I bet you have, old timer.

AAGI
Don't call me that, asshole. I
fought my way here and I can still
fight.

She opens her sash to reveal a set of knives.

MICKY
Eh!

AAGI
See?

MICKY
I see.

AAGI
No kidding, dude. I can be
dangerous.

MICKY
(laughing)

AAGI
Don't you laugh.

MICKY
Where's Blue?

AAGI
Why do you care?

MICKY
Curious.

AAGI
I suppose they gave you that
misguided deception about hyper
sexual disorder or something.

MICKY
No, I didn't hear that--oh yeah!
Aleina did mention something!
Sounds intriguing. So she screws
every nut that comes in here,
right?

AAGI
Unlikely.

MICKY
Maybe she's cured, right?

AAGI

It's a load of crap. She had to use sex to get shit so she could survive. Now she's here, that's over. Aleina sometimes has delusions. Like she's our savior or something! She's crazy. I save myself.

MICKY

I bet you do. We're all crazy. These are crazy times.

AAGI

There's crazy and there's CRAZY.

MICKY

You're from Russia right?

AAGI

Are you fucking kidding me? I'm from St. Louis.

She sings: "Meet me in St. Louis, Louis, meet me at the fair!"

MUSIC UP: PIANO
AND ORCHESTRA
BACKING

Aagi throws the broom down and goes to the stage and pulls the microphone out and begins to sing: "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas." As she finishes Aleina comes in.

MICKY

You sing pretty good for a doctor.

She jumps down off the stage, picks up the broom and keeps sweeping.

AAGI

Thanks sweetie.

MICKY

But it's not Christmas yet. It's only Thanksgiving.

AAGI

Thanksgiving. Pshaw.

MICKY

Yah. Enough! Oh. St. Louis must've been quite a place back in the day. When it was a place.

AAGI

It was OK. I left when I was eighteen and never went back.

MICKY

What'd you do?

AAGI

I went to medical school.

MICKY

Shit. You're a doctor?

AAGI

I was. I don't practice anymore. I'm retired.

MICKY

What kinda doctor?

AAGI

Neurology. We were doing AI research when everything got shut down.

MICKY

You're not an AI are you?

AAGI

No, fool. Jesus.

MICKY

Good.

AAGI

I could pick your brains but good, though, jerk.

MICKY

We could use a doctor around here.

AAGI

If there's some shit going down I can handle it but I don't want the word around or a million people will drift in here looking for miracles. I got a little medicine stashed away for emergencies.

MICKY

Why you dressed like an old bum?

AAGI

I am an old bum jerk and don't forget it.

Aleina, in nightgown, walks in.

ALEINA

Are you still here?

AAGI

He's bothering me. I'm trying to clean up.

ALEINA

Clean up. You--come to bed.

Micky docily follows her out, taking a quick glance back at Aagi.

EXT.CITY - DAY

Off in the distance, BLUE, wearing ragged fatigues and an army hat saying RUSSIAN RELIEF, fondles her ragged backpack and hides behind a few straggly bushes, observing.

Unbeknownst to her ISRAEL is taking pictures with his CAMERA IMPLANT.

CHYRON:

Picture montage from the implant. BEN, MICKY, ALEINA in CLOSE UP. Implant pictures have an INSTAGRAM quality. Images are in black and white, images sharp.

CHYRON/FLASHBACK:

CHYRON: 2020 FLASHBACK

GARAGE/WAREHOUSE - DAY. INT

BEN SPARKS, is tied to a folding chair by ropes in the middle of a garage/warehouse. AUDEN LIBER, a thug and two large body guards face him.

AUDEN

So tell us who you work for.

BEN

I work for myself. I'm a stringer.

AUDEN

I don't believe you. Where do you get all these photos?

Auden throws a pile of photos from a file on the table next to him to the floor at Ben's feet.

BEN

It's my job as a journalist! I take photos! I write articles. What's the big deal?

AUDEN

You write for Central Government?

BEN

No. It's still a free press, dude. You're from Central Government.

AUDEN

Everybody writes for us.

BEN

I don't. I write for the Independent Journal and it's distributed all over the country.

AUDEN

By who?

BEN

By who? By carriers, that's who!

AUDEN

You have a camera implant?

BEN

I want a camera implant. Nobody would give me one.

Charlie walks into the warehouse.

CHARLIE
What's going on here? Why you
holding my son?

AUDEN
This your son?

CHARLIE
Yes, asshole and let him loose or
I'll fucking tie your brains to the
chair.

BEN
What're you doing here dad?

CHARLIE
Saving your idiot ass.

The two bodyguards untie Ben. He bends down to pick up the photos and Auden steps into to block him.

AUDEN
What're you doing?

BEN
These are mine.

CHARLIE
What are they?

BEN
Photos to go with an article I'm
writing.

CHARLIE
Forget it kid.

BEN
I can't! I went to a lot of trouble
to take those!

CHARLIE
I said forget it!

END FLASHBACK:

INT. - DAY - A BI GEZUNT

Ben walks into the kitchen and sees his mother (Aleina) at the stove making dinner. He walks up behind her and gives her an affectionate hug.

ALEINA
What's that for?

BEN
I love you mom.

ALEINA
(turning from stove)
I love you too sweetie. What's
going on?

BEN
Nothing. Just wanted to say. What
you're doing here--everything--

ALEINA
Thanks for noticing. It's been a
huge amount of work.

BEN
I know mom. Thanks.

ALEINA
Ok.

Aleina nods. Unknown to them Micky is standing in the door
way watching.

PILOT

EPISODE TWO: KILL THE KING

INT.DAY - A BI GEZUNT

Aleina walks through surveying the half-done attempts to make this into a home away from home. Several people are, indeed, asleep on couches and chairs with their stuff strewn around them. In the kitchen a couple of people attempt to install a sink and there are the sounds of pots clanging while Aleina and Blue are cooking the evening meal.

Micky walks in, Ben following close behind him.

BEN

What a mess. Who are these people, mom?

ALEINA

Never mind. I'm taking care of them.

BEN

How can you take care of the homeless when we can barely take care of ourselves?

ALEINA

We're all homeless Ben, or haven't you noticed?

BEN

Dad left us some money. We need to be cautious.

ALEINA

Oh hell!

Micky and Aleina exchange glances. The old flame is still there but she does her best to ignore it. She looks at Ben with pride.

ALEINA (CONT'D)

So, Hello sweetie.

MICKY

Hi to you too.

ALEINA

I meant my son.

MICKY

We're all sons of somebody.

BEN
Got any food?

ALEINA
I scavenged a meatball from some of
the leftovers and stuck it into the
spaghetti sauce.

BEN
Great, made in our so-called
"kitchen?"

ALEINA
Help yourself.

BEN
Hope the meat isn't some dead
animal you found somewhere.

Ben goes to the kitchen.

MICKY
I never got to tell you--I'm truly
sorry about Charlie.

ALEINA
Are you?

MICKY
Of course.

ALEINA
You two weren't really friends
anymore. You abandoned him like so
many of his other buddies when shit
hit the fan.

MICKY
He left the coalition, Aleina,
there was nothing I could do.

ALEINA
You could have done a lot.

MICKY
Well, I left the coalition too
later on and by then Charlie was--

ALEINA
Trying to find his feet, Micky!

MICKY
I don't wanna hash over all this.

ALEINA

I bet you don't. But if you wanna hang around here--

MICKY

You asked for my help, remember? Why did you call me in after all this time?

ALEINA

Charlie dies--I'm alone. What do expect me to do?

MICKY

(chewing on ubiquitous toothpick)

I remember the good days Aleina, so let's focus on that.

ALEINA

I'm counting on your memories, Micky.

EXT. DAY - CITY

Ben is biking along a deserted street. The disintegrated remains of what was once a city. A group of 4 young thugs, 2 men and 2 women, covered in tattoos and wearing the metal garb of their gang, walk forward.

BEN

You guys--I'm just wanting to barter.

MALE 1

Whaddaya got?

BEN

Corn. Rice. Some flour. A grapefruit!

FEMALE 1

(spitting)

Shit. You got a bike.

BEN

Hey--I make deliveries.

FEMALE 2

(LAUGHS)

You make deliveries! OOOH.

The four surround Ben and begin grabbing the bike from under him, the two males pull him off.

BEN

Hey--!

FEMALE 2

Now just get the fuck off your bike
and we won't mess you up, OK?

MALE 1

This is great!

He gets on the bike and starts riding.

FEMALE 2

Bye asshole!

They walk off with Male 1 riding the bike. Ben turns, dejected to walk back to A Bi Gezunt. Male 2 runs back and grabs the bag from him. There is a tussle, with Ben losing.

MALE 1

Hey idiot--thanks!

Ben stares back dejected.

INT.DAY - A BI GEZUNT

Ben enters. Aleina is sitting at a table with AAGI. Aagi is reading a Tarot Spread.

BEN

Hey--stop your magical bullshit for
a minute.

AAGI

This isn't magic--it's
entertainment.

BEN

I thought you were a scientist or
something.

AAGI

Whadda you know?

ALEINA

Where's the stuff?

BEN

They stole my bike and the stuff I
had to barter.

ALEINA

They?

BEN

Gang kids. They had the metal shit on. I didn't want to fuck with them.

ALEINA

Jesus. The bike's gone? Don't know when we'll get another one, for God's sake!

BEN

I dunno. I can find one.

ALEINA

Where?

AAGI

You have to fight gangs to get anything, kid. Maybe go further south and see if something's lying around.

ALEINA

Fat chance.

BEN

I'm sorry, mom.

ALEINA

No worries. It's not your fault.

INT. CAFE - DAY

The kitchen is a mess filled with dirty pots and pans, dishes piled high, rags, food and leftovers strewn all over the large table serving as a counter. A rat is seen scurrying across the floor. Blue is leaning against the counter kissing Micky. She pushes him, he backs up into a mess of pots and pans that CLATTER to the floor. Blue laughs.

BLUE

You're a total klutz.

MICKY

I know.

BLUE

I gotta take off. I'm looking for a bike.

MICKY

I thought we had a bike.

BLUE

We did. Ben lost it.

MICKY

How the fuck can you lose a bike?

BLUE

Some punk kids stole it from him.

MICKY

Jesus.

He moves toward her sitting on the counter, tries to kiss her, putting his hands up her skirt. She resists. He unzips his pants and falls on top of her, pushing her down onto the counter. She forcefully pushes him away just as Aleina enters the kitchen. They both part.

BLUE

You are an animal!

ALEINA

Get the fuck out of here, Micky. Go find a bike or something.

BLUE

Yeah--go find a bike asshole!

Micky zips his pants up, cuffs Aleina on the chin and walks out.

ALEINA

He sucks.

BLUE

I know.

ALEINA

But you do too, Blue. Keep your hands off men. You don't need to barter your body anymore.

BLUE

I don't! He came after me.

ALEINA

Whatever.

BLUE

He's old.

ALEINA

I know dear. We're the same age.

BLUE

Were you guys married?

ALEINA

No. I was married to Charlie. You know the guy who died and left me this place?

BLUE

Oh. So who's Charlie?

ALEINA

Just an old friend. Where you sleeping.

BLUE

Off in the shed. Ben's there too.

ALEINA

Don't fuck my son.

BLUE

I don't--

ALEINA

Just leave him alone. He's damaged.

BLUE

I know.

ALEINA

You don't know. He's had a rough time. In the past.

BLUE

Fine.

ALEINA

Just be careful walking around at night. These streets are nasty after dark.

BLUE

Yeah. When winter comes--

ALEINA

When winter comes we gotta get this place in gear--there will be tons of people wanting to stay here to get out of the cold.

BLUE
Is this a charity thing?

ALEINA
Charlie wanted to do good. He was that kind of man. He made it a condition of his will that I make something good of A Bi Gezunt.

BLUE
What even does that mean? *A Bi Gezunt*. It sounds like a sneeze.

ALEINA
That's *Gesundheit!* So, you're Russian, you should know.

BLUE
I don't remember any Russian. I haven't spoken it since I was seven or something.

ALEINA
It's Yiddish anyway.

BLUE
Yiddish?

ALEINA
What Jewish people spoke.

BLUE
Oh, I don't know any Jews.

ALEINA
You know me don't you? You know Ben—we're Jews! At least we were Jews. I don't know what we are now.

BLUE
Survivors.

ALEINA
Where the fuck is that Merlot?

BLUE
Behind the fridge. I hid it.

ALEINA
Get the bottle will you? We're gonna drink to something and then you go find us another bike.

Blue goes to fetch the bottle--opens it and pours out to glasses. They clink glasses.

BLUE
To--?

ALEINA
A Bi Gezune--It Could Always Be
Worse.

They drink for a moment.

ALEINA (CONT'D)
So Blue? That's not your real name.

BLUE
Natella.

ALEINA
Natella.

BLUE
Nobody calls me that.

BLACK OUT

END PILOT

INT. NIGHT - A BI GEZUNT

Blue sits on a stool center stage with the band. There are a few people in the cafe drinking and listening. Ben is off in a corner playing cards with Israel and the cronies, Aleina is walking about pouring wine and taking dirty dishes off tables. The band, "Dark Days," is a ragged, makeshift band: guitar, piano, violin, drums with Blue as singer. As they finished the last song, "Coyote Road, " there is scattered applause.

BLUE
Thank you people. We are called
Dark Days and we'll be back in a
few.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT - CAFE

Blue sits on a stool on stage. There is a spotlight on her. The cafe is filled with people--drunks, homeless, young, old, in rags and tatters and a few decently dressed.

BLUE

(directly to camera)

Hey, it never really happened. The whole scene. I'm not that sexy. The whole deal--is a figment of my imagination. Or yours. To be honest, I would never participate in sex with a stranger, especially someone older than me, and also to be fair, I am just way too shy for all that. And I wouldn't want to put Aleina in a bad light or anything. As if she would--well, she's protecting me. Right? She's protecting all of us. Actually, the family dog raised me--back in Russia. I am not kidding. Our dog--Nanna. I know it sounds odd but really--the dog was incredibly bright and well--many people wonder how in hell a dog could raise a child, but it wasn't that hard. My parents were dead--who did I have? There were some adults around but they were busy trying to survive and Nanna, who I sometimes called Fetish, kiddingly, because I was just a child you know--Nanna changed me for the good. Taught me the wild ways--survival, killing, right, wrong--she found me squirrels, buried me in leaves, foudn this other orphan Yanif and he taught me how to cook over an open fire and then Nanna just left us to figure out on our own. So--my dog really raised me and to be honest she taught me more about love than any human could possibly teach a child---

ISRAEL

CUT!

BLUE

What?

ISRAEL

You're improvising too much. There's no improvising here! We have a script and the script is good. What's the fucking matter with you? You're no actor. There is nothing in my script about a fucking dog. Where'd you get that shit? A dog raising a child? Are you fucking crazy?

BEN

I like the dog shit.

ISRAEL

You're gonna sleep in dog shit. Dog's don't raise children!

BEN

They did in Peter Pan.

ISRAEL

This isn't Peter Pan. I am not writing a myth--I am writing--War and Peace or something!

BEN

Jesus. What a pretentious geek.

ISRAEL

I am?

BEN

You are.

BLUE

You both are. Anyway, these are true stories.

BEN

True by what definition?

BLUE

I mean they are truth from my heart.

ISRAEL

Your heart--

BEN

Is a Lonely Hunter.

ISRAEL

Haha. I don't care. The point is, you are an actor--well, you are NOT an actor but we are pretending--we are allowing you to pretend to be an actor--there is a script and we are sticking to the script. I am not negotiating this.

BLUE

The script sucks.

BEN

I agree.

ISRAEL

You agree?

BLUE

It's boring.

ISRAEL

Then go and write your own script! But meanwhile in my film you speak my lines! Got it?

BLUE

This isn't even a real movie. Nobody is gonna see it. We don't even have a projector!

ISRAEL

We will.

BLUE

When?

ISRAEL

When Ben goes out and finds one!

BEN

I'll have to travel to another continent to find one. On FOOT.

ISRAEL

Whaddayou care? You're getting paid aren't you?

BLUE

He's paying you?

BEN

A grapefruit. He gave me a grapefruit.

ISRAEL

Those are almost impossible to come by!

BLUE

I'd like a grapefruit!

ISRAEL

We're out.

BLUE

I hate the Apocolypse. I wish it had never happened.

ISRAEL

So do we all. So do we all.

BLUE

You old timers could've stopped it!

ISRAEL

Yeah? How?

BLUE

Where's Micky?

BEN

He went across town to trade for coffee.

BLUE

No he didn't. Aleina brought a boat load of coffee here yesterday.

ISRAEL

I don't know then, I don't know. Who cares? What do you care?

BLUE

You're not even a director. Or a writer. You're just an idiot homeless person like the rest of us.

ISRAEL

We gotta do something creative with our time.

He puts the camera down on the table dejectedly.

BEN

Good try, Izzie.

ISRAEL
Let's try it again.

BLUE
Forget it. I have to go.

She pulls a shawl from the back of a chair and drapes it around her.

ISRAEL
It's really cold out there--that isn't warm enough. Take my coat.

He gives her a huge black great coat.

BLUE
Wow. Thanks. I'll bring it back. By the way, Blue is not my real name.

BEN
NO.

BLUE
Wanna know?

BEN
NO.

BLUE
Natella. It's Natella.

Natella leaves laughing. Ben and Israel look at one another.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CAFE - DAY

SUSAN
This is it.

VAN
Oh look at that crappy sign.

SUSAN
Well...

VAN
It's Ok.

SUSAN
(reading sign)
"A Bi Gezunt. Cafe. When you're here your home. Safe Haven. No drugs. Some alcohol. Welcome."
Primitive.

VAN
Simple.

SUSAN
True.

Micky is stubbing out a cigarette and looking at Susan and Van. They glance over at him.

VAN
You know us?

MICKY
Doubt it. I'm Micky. Friend of
Aleina's.

VAN
Oh.

SUSAN
Aleina?

VAN
Ben's mother.

SUSAN
Oh.

MICKY
This is her place.

SUSAN
He knows Ben.

MICKY
You know Ben?

VAN
Long days before. When we were both
stringers.

MICKY
For what news conglomerate.

VAN
People Over Power, The Peace
Parade, World News United--

MICKY
Ok. Well, Aleina could sure use a
hand.

SUSAN
I'm good with a hammer.

There is an awkward silence as the three size each other up.

Aleina walks out with a tub of water which she pours out onto a corner of the front yard.

MICKY

These two wanna help. He knows Ben.

ALEINA

Great! We could use some help.

SUSAN

I'm Susan.

ALEINA

Where you from?

SUSAN

Puerto Rico by way of Old Milwaukee.

ALEINA

New Milwaukee is a pit I hear.

SUSAN

It was a pit before, it's a pit now. Not much has changed.

ALEINA

You're welcome.

VAN

I'm a friend of Ben's. We were working together before--

ALEINA

Oh. Yeah. Well, both of you, come in. If you can carve out a room space for yourself you can stay. It takes bricks and building though and for that you have to barter. You probably know all that. But here we gotta work for whatever we have.

VAN

Of course.

They follow her inside the cafe. The cafe has been gutted and rehabbed. It is not divided into several rooms: the main cafe, the kitchen, the main stage and makeshift theatre, and around the perimeter are "rooms" enclosed by blankets, curtains etc. In each room is a mattress and a shelf for personal items.

The upstairs of the building is being built for storage, a larger theatre and better living quarters for residents.

INT.DAY - CAFE

ALEINA

We've got fourteen residents now.

VAN

Wow.

ALEINA

It's picking up. But we're selective. I'm the final word on whether somebody lives here or not.

SUSAN

What's your criterion?

ALEINA

Usefulness.

SUSAN

That it?

ALEINA

Get along with the group. Cooperative attitude. Not too much baggage.

SUSAN

What constitutes baggage?

ALEINA

We can talk about that later. Micky deals cards over there in the corner. Sometimes he gets some good stuff for us when he wins. But we can't afford him losing. The riff raff comes in at night to hang out but we gotta be firm--no overnights. You have to pass muster if you want to live here permanently.

Blue walks in carrying a tray with things to set on the tables.

SUSAN

Do you make actual money?

ALEINA

Money is hard to come by. It's not worth anything anyway. What's your profession?

SUSAN

I ran a meditation retreat in Seattle.

ALEINA

Useful.

SUSAN

Well, sometimes getting quiet can be useful.

ALEINA

We're all quiet here. Nobody wants to know anybody's story. So drop the stories, ok?

SUSAN

(hurt)
Sure.

VAN

Ben's a great storyteller.

Just as he speaks Ben walks in carrying two bicycle tires.

BEN

No bicycle but I found some tires!

ALEINA

Great.

BEN

It's a start.

VAN

Hey Ben! Remember me?

Ben looks at Van for a moment and several reactions cross his face.

BEN

Yeah. Vaguely. I think I do.
Weren't you working for Garabaldi?

VAN

No..no I never worked for that rat.

BEN

Oh. I was sure you did.

VAN

No.

ALEINA

He and his friend here want to join us.

BEN

Ok. Well, you gotta be vetted you know. Thoroughly.

VAN

I don't have any papers or anything. I used to.

SUSAN

Nobody has papers these days.

BEN

True. Well--I'll leave it to mom here. I'm gonna stash these tires and go back out hunting a frame.

ALEINA

Good.

Aleina looks at Van and Susan.

ALEINA (CONT'D)

Well--let me show you the place.

Aleina takes Susan and Van toward the back. Micky walks in.

BLUE

You playing black jack tonight?

MICKY

That's just a front. I'm not a dealer stupid. I'm a black market dealer.

BLUE

Oh. Cause everybody thinks--

MICKY

I know what everybody thinks. Where's Ben?

BLUE

Out looking for a bike frame.

MICKY

Oh jesus. That'll take forever.

BLUE
Well, what else have we got?
Forever, right?

MICKY
You're a child.

BLUE
I've never been a child.

Israel walks in, camera and tripod in his arms.

ISRAEL
Ready to do some more?

BLUE
I don't think acting is my
vocation.

ISRAEL
You're the only girl around here.

BLUE
No-- we just got a new girl come
in. And what about those Gypsies?
They were around yesterday?

ISRAEL
They're unique but stupid. I can't
get them to read a script.

BLUE
You can't get me to read a script.

ISRAEL
If you'd stop talking about being
raised by dogs we'd be fine.

He sets up camera and tripod.

MICKY
How you running that?

ISRAEL
Batteries. Found some when we
cleaned out the kitchen.

MICKY
That won't last long.

ISRAEL
I know. That's why we gotta get on
it.

MICKY

Whatever.

ISRAEL

Sit on that stool Blue.

Blue sits.

ISRAEL (CONT'D)

Where's the monologue I gave you?

She reaches into her pocket and pulls out a crumpled paper.

BLUE

Here.

ISRAEL

Read. Just a minute. Let me get focused.

CHRON: Blue as seen through camera lens. Black and White

BLUE

(reading)

The way of the fire leads us to the Sun Door. We quit the world. We find the fire from within and focus on that. The outer world becomes a backdrop to the creative story inside. I knew an old woman like this. Well, she was not always an old woman. In the earlier days she was a tall and strong dancer with so much energy and humor. She always approached men the same way. "Anybody who can catch me by surprise, in any way, I shall bow before him. But only for a short time. Then I will send him flying. But for a minute--you can be my master." Well, of course many men wanted to try to surprise this old woman, who's former name was Alexandra Golan.

(she breaks character & looks up)

Come on Isreal! What's this crap about!

ISRAEL

Keep reading!

BLUE

Ok. Alexandra was then young and vital. Many men came and went but they bored her silly. Until one day a young man from Jerusalem presented himself. "My name is Noah," he said, "as in the Ark." She laughed. "What moves you?" She asked him. "I work against the sin of not being alert," he told her, and from then on they were inseparable. They got married. They had a house. They raised four boys. Those four boys went out into the world. Now Alexandra is an old woman who wonders, where did the surprises go?

BLUE (CONT'D)

Oh for God's sake--is that it?

ISRAEL

It's part of a larger mosaic. I just got that bit filmed.

BLUE

You got it. Now can I go back to work?

INT. MICKY'S PLACE - DAY

Micky's place is two rooms carved out of an abandoned building behind the cafe. There are two primitive but livable rooms with a bed, table, a wood burning stove and a sideboard holding dishes, cups plates etc. On the stove is a kettle next to which is a karaf for coffee.

Micky is lying on the bed. There is a KNOCK at the door.

MICKY

Oh all right--just a fucking minute.

He ambles to the door. Isreal stands there with Susan. She is holding a bottle of imported whiskey.

MICKY (CONT'D)

Hey--

ISRAEL

We bring peace offering kimosabbe.

MICKY
Where the fuck--?

ISRAEL
Never mind. Gets us through the
door, right? This here is Susan.

Susan and Micky nod at each other. He eyes her up and down.

SUSAN
Can we--?

They step in.

ISRAEL
Primitive.

MICKY
Complaining? You got a cubby hole
sectioned off by a blanket.

ISRAEL
True.

MICKY
I need my privacy.

ISRAEL
Let's break open the whiskey.

MICKY
I was making coffee--let's put it
in our coffee.

SUSAN
You got coffee?

Micky nods. Goes over to the stove, opens a small drawer in
the sideboard and turns around, a Walther+ P22 handgun in his
right hand.

Isreal sees the gun and raises his hands.

ISRAEL
Jesus! What the fuck! We're friends
here!

SUSAN
I--

MICKY
Nobody's friend till I say so. I
don't know this woman.

SUSAN

Aleina--

ISRAEL

Aleina vetted her!

SUSAN

Please--

MICKY

(slaps the gun down on the
table)

Just to make sure we're all on the
same page here. Sit down.

Susan and Isreal sit at the long table.

ISRAEL

We're all from the same place,
Micky. I'm on a friendly mission.

MICKY

Making your stupid movies?

ISRAEL

I'm creating modern myth.

MICKY

Bullshit.

ISRAEL

Bullshit?

SUSAN

What's going on here?

ISRAEL

He's spying.

SUSAN

What?

ISRAEL

(bursts into loud laughing)
Oh God! That's ridiculous! Come on,
dude! Spying? For who?

MICKY

Why're you wearing army fatigues?

ISRAEL

It was in a box of issue that never
got issued! Found it in an old
weapons warehouse on 6th street.

MICKY

Oh fuck you. This is the shit
Garabaldi and his team wears.

ISRAEL

I know nothing about them. Micky--

MICKY

Don't call me Micky, asshole. To
you I am Mr. McCarthy. Say it: MR.
MCCARTHY.

ISRAEL

Mr. McCarthy of the Brooklyn gang,
meet Susan.

MICKY

Ok.

ISRAEL

Ok? Is that friendly? Susan has a
lot to offer.

Micky picks up the pistol from the table.

SUSAN

Whoa! I'm not armed! I'm not
dangerous! Could you--?

ISRAEL

Micky! For God's sake we're
friends!

MICKY

No one's a friend until they prove
themselves a friend. Until then--

BLACK OUT

MUSIC UP: "NO
ORIDNARY LOVE"
THE CIVIL WARS

INT.DAY - CAFE

Aagi, white hair flowing, dressed as usual in her usual hippy-
type voluminous garb, is seated at a table with Blue and
Aleina. There is a tarot deck spread on the table. Aagi
lights what looks like a cigarette.

BLUE

Is that a real cigarette?

AAGI

No my dear, it's not! Where the fuck do we get real cigarettes these days. Anybody growing tobacco or something?

ALEINA

Not hardly.

AAGI

It's medicinal, kiddo. Helps me eyesight and my hearing. I'm old.

ALEINA

Yeah--lemme try some.

AAGI

You're not as old as me.

ALEINA

Oh shut up.

Aagi hands her the reefer. Aleina takes a big toke and passes it back.

BLUE

Can I have some?

ALEINA

It's only for old people.

AAGI

Yeah--oldsters like us.

BLUE

Where'd you get it?

AAGI

An old Shaman I used to know. In the old days they called them doctors. But I been stashing it for a long time. Found it in a little pouch at the back of my pack. Been saving it, you know, for times like this.

BLUE

What's in it?

ALEINA

Hair of the dog.

BLUE

What?

AAGI
 (to Aleina)
 She's so naive.

BLUE
 I'm not.

AAGI
 Do you even know what naive means?

ALEINA
 Give her a taste.

AAGI
 OK. This shit's like saltpeter--
 kills the sex drive. Good thing too
 cause there's nowhere and no one to
 have sex with these days.

ALEINA
 Not true.

AAGI
 Well, maybe for you. Not me.

Aagi hadns reefer to Blue. Blue takes a drag and coughs profusely. Aleina hands her a glass of Vodka to stop the coughing.

BLUE
 Uge! This shit--I'm gonna die--

AAGI
 No babe, you're gonna live.

BLUE
 Uh--Ok.

(she passes it back to Aleina who puts it out on a dish)

BLUE (CONT'D)
 I heard Micky was like a famous
 director once.

ALEINA
 Who told you that?

BLUE
 I heard.

ALEINA
 You gonna read these cards or what,
 Aagi.

Micky walks in with a bottle of whiskey under his arm.

MICKY

Hey hey! Look what I got!

ALEINA

You didn't get it--Ben traded for it.

MICKY

True! He got 3 bottles--I kept one.

ALEINA

Great. Put it in the back. A boat load of pilgrims are coming off the boat tonight.

BLUE

Off the boat?

ALEINA

I mean--

MICKY

Manner of speaking, hon. She means homeless pilgrims are wandering in here now they've heard about it all. You singing tonight Aleina?

ALEINA

Maybe.

AAGI

We're reading now. So shut up and sit down or go and stash that whiskey in the back.

MICKY

Bye.

He leaves. Blue looks after him.

AAGI

He's not your type.

BLUE

Who is? Nobody's under 40 here.

AAGI

The kids went other places.

ALEINA

Most of'em died, really.

AAGI

Ok. Now let's do these cards girls.

ALEINA

You're a doctor and a scientist,
Aagi. Do you really believe in this
mumbo jumbo?

AAGI

More so now than ever. The
intuitive is not the enemy of the
rational. Science is a belief
system just like everything else.
Science got us out of trouble, then
it got us into trouble, and now
trouble is all we have. Now, what's
your question?

ALEINA

This place, my life, my children.

AAGI

You only have one child, Ben,
right?

ALEINA

I have more. I--don't know where
they are. Two daughters. I've taken
Blue here in as a kind of--

BLUE

I'm not your stand-in for a child,
Aleina. I'm grown up and I make my
own decisions.

ALEINA

I just meant--

AAGI

We're all children, Blue, so shut
your mouth.

Aagi lays the cards. The deck is the traditional Rider-Waite
deck. The central card (Situation) is The Hanged Man.

AAGI (CONT'D)

This card refers to the
circumstances you find yourself in
with regard to your concerns. It's
a general context for your question--
the setting, the politics,
whatever is going on.

(MORE)

AAGI (CONT'D)

Consider the meaning of this card in light of issues, people, and forces shaping your environment and circumstances. The hand you're dealt. Right now. Capiche?

ALEINA

Yeah.

AAGI

So--The Hanged Man. The Hanged Man in this position indicates that a scapegoat may be needed. The situation will feel tense, difficult, and blocked until someone is produced to absorb the blame. Scapegoating doesn't require truth or justice. It is the result of the collective projection of guilt. Some situations may be wired to such a degree that heads must roll. Those who subject themselves to a position such as this know the odds and prepare to undergo their fate in the way of the warrior -- with composure and dignity.

Show compassion for this person. If it is not you, remember but for the grace of God it could have been. There is no moral stain on those who find themselves in the position of the scapegoat. There is one, however, on those who judge themselves to be superior and immune to this fate. The ordeal will have been worth it if it brings the participants, including you, to a new point of view and release from the past.

ALEINA

So who's going to be the scapegoat?

The three look at one another and look down in silence.

AAGI

That's only one card.

BLACK OUT

INT. DAY - MICKY'S PLACE

Israel sits on a stool Micky is on the bed, cradling the gun in his lap.

EXT. DAY - MICKY'S PLACE

Susan is sitting on the ground, fiddling with her back pack, waiting.

INT. DAY - MICKY'S PLACE

MICKY

You know, as long as I got you here.

ISRAEL

You didn't have to banish Susan.

MICKY

She's not banished. I just need to get some facts out here.

Israel hands a bottle to Micky.

ISRAEL

Wanna pour this?

MICKY

Fine.

Micky gets up, takes the whiskey to the sink, grabs 2 glasses and pours each 3/5's full. As he hands the glass to Israel:

MICKY (CONT'D)

I don't like how you bring a stranger to my place.

ISRAEL

Come on! This place is nothing but strangers! Aleina has an open door policy.

MICKY

That's Aleina. That's A BI Gezunt. That's not me. This is my little hovel carved into the rock of this shit hole we're in. And stop messing with Blue!

He drinks

ISRAEL

With Blue? What the fuck--?

MICKY

She is not a film actor.

ISRAEL

She signed a deal. We're making a movie.

MICKY

About what?

ISRAEL

About this--the life, the whole shebang. Historical reference for future people or--

MICKY

There aren't gonna be future people. The species is damned. Make way for whales.

ISRAEL

You can be in it, if you wanna be.

MICKY

What about Ben?

ISRAEL

What about Ben?

MICKY

I'm not an actor.

ISRAEL

We're all actors.

MICKY

Who told you that?

ISRAEL

Never mind. Look--I want what we all want.

MICKY

I gotta feeling that's different between you and me.

ISRAEL

It's the same.

MICKY

Yeah? I got the gun.

ISRAEL
So what? Shoot me!

MICKY
How old are you?

ISRAEL
What do you care?

MICKY
It matters. You oldsters remember things.

ISRAEL
We do. You haven't seen shit. You haven't been through shit like we have, you don't remember the closing of the banks, the end of currency, the oil drying up. All you know is what's gone--you don't remember what was there. You weren't alive when the presidency reformed in the Traid Dictatorship! The shit hole we're living in was defended by the likes of me! I fought in the army for real asshole but you wear the remnants of our uniforms like a joke.

MICKY
I can't help it if I'm young.

ISRAEL
Wearing a uniform you haven't got the balls or grace to carry off.

MICKY
And anyway--when was 50--something young?

ISRAEL
When you're 75 everything is young.

MICKY
I'm sorry.

ISRAEL
So I am 75 featherbrain and not some child wandering around looking for a kill! Or Trading for shit for shit for shit.

MICKY

I don't give a fuck about how the money is dried up anyway dude. It's all about barter--how you gonna eat? Stea the shit outta whatever they got and give it somebody else for what you want. Whatever you want! It can be had my friend. Except me. I can't be had.

ISRAEL

People can be had.

MICKY

An old cynical bastard.

ISRAEL

Oh and you're such an idealist? You know, once way back in 2019 when the world bank crashed and the dollar became worthless we were so full up with inflation you could buy a ham for \$20,000--tiny little notes you carried in a special pouch. Head of the Global Reserve devalued all currency until it was worthless and then it just ceased to exist--pooof! Money gone. We used it for scrap. I burned the shit in my stove to keep warm. You got something I want?

MICKY

I got Blue. I got Aleina. I got A Bi Gezunt.

ISRAEL

Blue's her own girl--she's not for you. And Aleina--she'll toss you in a second.

MICKY

Maybe. But i have other things she wants.

ISRAEL

Like--?

Silence.

ISRAEL (CONT'D)

So--history. Ever read the Torture Reports from 2022?

MICKY
I read'em. I made'em!

Susan pokes her head in.

SUSAN
Can I come in?

MICKY
Not yet!

ISRAEL
Come in!

She walks in.

SUSAN
Don't shoot me!

She laughs. Micky stares at her. Israel walks over to Micky on the bed.

ISRAEL
Give me the gun.

SUSAN
Hey--

MICKY
In your dreams.

SUSAN
Hey--

MICKY
I may have been a child once, but not now. A lot of people you don't want to see already know about you Israel.

SUSAN
Know?

ISRAEL
Know?

Israel backs away. The camera implant shows a series of rapid succession pictures in Black And white.

MICKY
Fuck you. Get out of here. Both of you.

Israel looks at Susan.

ISRAEL

Let's go. Can I have the rest of my bottle?

MICKY

I'm keeping it as payment for not blowing your cover.

SUSAN

What cover.

ISRAEL

Shut up Susan. Let's go.

The leave. Micky picks up the bottle, takes a long drink just as Israel slams the door behind him.

INT. NIGHT - A BI GEZUNT

Aleina is on stage. An orchestra backing comes up and she sings: "As Time Goes By." Behind her is a screen and pictures of her parents in the War are projected. These are actually pics from the 40's.

FADE OUT.

INT. DAY - MARKETPLACE

MUSIC UP: VERA
LYNN "ROOM FIVE
HUNDRED AND
FOUR"

Ben arrives at the market with a backpack and several large bags filled with things for trade. MARNIE, a young woman and friend of Ben's who owns a stall of clothing and various hi-tech equipment, no longer useful, cell phones, radios, computers, iPads etc. A museum of dead junk. She steps out from behind her stall and HUGS Ben.

MARNIE

Ben! My God I haven't seen you in--

BEN

Yeah, I know.

MARNIE

You've been gone--ages! What brings-

BEN

I'm back.

MARNIE

Yeah. See my booth?

BEN

Yeah I see. What are you doing with all that tech stuff? No use for it now.

MARNIE

I know. But--

BEN

You don't sell it or anything right?

MARNIE

It's sentimental. And some people-- you know they want a cell phone around.

BEN

What the hell for?

MARNIE

Just to remind them or--

BEN

Wishing won't make it so.

MARNIE

Yeah...

BEN

Dreamers.

MARNIE

True.

BEN

I've got a shit load for trade.

MARNIE

I have some clothes. Nice ones.

Ben walks over to her stall and picks through the clothing hanging on a rope.

BEN

This is nice.

He pulls out a deep red shirt.

MARNIE

Try it on!

BEN
I don't have any money.

MARNIE
No worries.

He looks inside his bag.

BEN
I got a grapefruit.

MARNIE
A grapefruit! Wow! Haven't one in
ages!

He hands her the grapefruit.

MARNIE (CONT'D)
Try on the shirt. It's a nice color
for you. It's from France.

BEN
Oh.

He takes off his tattered green army shirt. He's wearing a
black undershirt. He puts on the red shirt.

MARNIE
Looks nice, dude!

BEN
Thanks.

MARNIE
I'll take the grapefruit.

BEN
Ok.

He looks deeper into the bag.

MUSIC UP: DAVID
GRAY "BACK IN
THE WORLD AGAIN"

Ben pulls out a multi-patterned short skirt and a black crop
top.

MARNIE
Oh, that's cute! Where'd you get
it?

BEN
Mom found it at the cafe.

MARNIE

Cafe?

BEN

Yeah--haven't you heard. We got a cafe, bookstore and flophouse.

MARNIE

Where?

BEN

Over by the old courthouse and train station. Behind the mass burial--well, a mile past it.

MARNIE

Thank God! I hate that place! That whole mass burial thing--it scares me.

BEN

Me too.

They both laugh.

BEN (CONT'D)

We buried my dad there a couple of months ago.

MARNIE

I'm sorry.

BEN

Have the skirt and top--and the grapefruit.

MARNIE

Ok, thanks! But I--um--

She roots around on the table.

MARNIE (CONT'D)

Here's something I found. It's kinda cool. It's an old cassette tape thing with batteries--they still work! There's a tape in there!

BEN

Yeah?

MARNIE

Yeah.

BEN

But how we gonna hear it?

MARNIE

Ear buds. I got some somewhere.

She roots around on the table and comes up with a pair of earbuds. She holds them up triumphantly and they both laugh.

BEN

Hey yeah!

MARNIE

Whoo hoo!

BEN

I got a shit load to trade.

MARNIE

There's a food booth over there--

BEN

Ok--let's eat and listen to this tape and then I gotta get to work.

They wander over to the food booth and get some sandwiches in baskets and find a place to sit on the wall behind the market.

Marnie plugs the earbuds into the cassette, turns it on and they each have a bud in one ear.

MUSIC UP: "MARY"

PATTY GRIFFIN

Ben puts his arm around Marnie and she puts her head on his shoulder as they listen to the music and watch the market.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

Ben is walking around the market haggling with buyers and sellers, pulling all manner of things out of his bags and backpack. Marnie has put on the new dress and top and is following him, introducing him to various venders and helping him barter.

VENDER

You guys make a good team.

BEN

Yeah. So you want that bag of oranges? I need some wine glasses and a set of dishes.

VENDER

Done.

Later.

EXT. MAGIC HOUR - MARKETPLACE

BEN

I'm done. I got rid of a shit load
and got all the stuff mom wants.

He looks at Marnie.

BEN (CONT'D)

Thanks.

MARNIE

Hey, you're welcome. I didn't make
a dime today! But I had fun.

BEN

You should come by.

MARNIE

What's it called?

BEN

A Bi Gezunt.

MARNIE

What's that mean?

BEN

Leave it to mom to draw on her
Jewish roots. It means, in Yiddish,
"it could always be worse."

MARNIE

Oh god. My family was Irish. Is
féidir leis an ghríon a bheith ag
an doras.

BEN

Oh.

MARNIE

"May the sun always be at your
door," or something.

BEN

Hah! Well, I better get back.
Mom'll love these wine glasses and
dishes and the extension cords.

MARNIE
You guys have electricity?

BEN
Micky scored a generator.

MARNIE
Wow. Who's Micky?

BEN
My mom's old friend.

MARNIE
Ok.

BEN
Later.

MARNIE
Bye. I gotta pack this shit up.

BEN
Where you staying?

MARNIE
Here and there.

BEN
Come by. We got rooms for people.

MARNIE
Ok. I will. Maybe tomorrow.

BEN
Tomorrow.

They nod, Ben hefts the pack and bags and takes off down the road. Marnie watches him go.

She suddenly on a whim runs after him

MARNIE
Hey!

BEN
What? I gotta get this shit back.

MARNIE
I know. I want you to see something!

BEN
What?

MARNIE
Come on. Please. Trust me.

BEN
OK.

She starts walking toward the woods. He follows.

BEN (CONT'D)
This pack is heavy.

MARNIE
We're almost there!

In the woods they come to a clearing and the remains of what was once a beautiful designer home in the woods.

MARNIE (CONT'D)
This place was the President's old
getaway house.

BEN
Wow. Never knew this was here.

MARNIE
Put your pack down. Nobody's here.

Ben puts his pack down by the steps leading to the house. Marnie starts climbing up the outside of the house which is mainly large cement juttings. Ben follows. They reach the roof of the house, out of breath. As they stand there and look out we see the panorama of the entire area. They realize they have a view of miles out.

BEN
Wow.

MARNIE
Isn't this something? You can see
everything!

BEN
Yeah.

Ben grabs a rock from the roof. He throws it out.

MARNIE
Hey, sit here.

They sit on the roof and look out in silence.

BEN
This is great.

MARNIE

I found this a while back. I come here when I need to get away and think.

BEN

Anything in the house?

MARNIE

Naw--it's been picked dry.

Ben finds another rock.

BEN

Something's making me want to drop rocks or something.

Marnie looks into her small bag which she has carried up.

MARNIE

Try this.

She hands him a large blue feather.

BEN

Where'd you get this?

MARNIE

Market. You know. You drop the feather. I'll watch.

Ben drops the feather. Camera follows feather as it slowly floats out into the air.

Ben and Marnie look at one another.

BEN

Love is the plan.

MARNIE

The plan is death.

MUSIC UP: JAMES
BLACKSHW "LOVE
IS THE PLAN, THE
PLAN IS DEATH"

INT. NIGHT - A BI GEZUNT

November. A Thanksgiving of sorts is underway.

Kitchen: Elena is putting the finishing touches on a family-style turkey meal. The "turkey" is questionable--could be dog or wolf.

Main Room: The main-stay people are gathered around, some standing and drinking vodka, others seated at small tables thrown together to make one big table. Van, Susan are off to one side talking furiously and picking at the table Elena has set for starters. The atmosphere is festive but rough-- "Deadwood" meets "Casablanca" meets the future. Tables and boards on tree trunks. The gang's all here.

Micky saunters in wearing a black leather motorcycle jacket and carrying a large box. Aleina, Ben and Blue enter from the kitchen carrying large platters heaped with food.

Musicians are on the stage playing great music--piano, violin, guitar, oboe.

Seated at the table: Israel, Aagie, Marnie, Vasi, Louis and Johanna (Garabaldi's spy) posing as "Joanne."

ISRAEL

What the hell is that, Aleina, dog?

ALEINA

Never you mind--it's food!

BLUE

Some Thanksgiving.

BEN

First Thanksgiving I've seen in a decade.

Micky throws his large box onto the center of the table.

AAGI

What is it, Micky?

BEN

I'll open it.

He opens the box and sees a large, ornate square white cake with frosting decorated with a turkey in brown frosting at the middle.

ALEINA

Wow. Where'd you get this?

MICKY

What diff? I got it from a friend,
let's say.

BEN

And the jacket too.

Ben fingers the shoulder of Micky's jacket. Micky pulls away.

MICKY

Hey--yeah. What's it to you?

BEN

I'd like on.

MICKY

Then you'll have to do what I did.

BEN

What's that?

ISRAEL

Come on guys--never mind! It's time
to eat.

VAN

Anybody wanna say a prayer or
something?

ALL:

NO!

Laughter.

VAN

Ok. Whatever.

ALEINA

I'll do a toast. Pick up your
glasses.

Aleina stands at the head of the tables, Ben on her right,
Blue on her left.

ALEINA (CONT'D)

A B Gezunt started with a bunch of
boards and a lot of people helping
out. Some of you are here--others
are out or have moved on and a
couple of us even died. Won't
mention that.

BEN

Who died?

ALEINA

Never mind. This was a dream of Charlie's. He died and left the dream to me. I want to make good on his wish. So--here's to you Charlie.

BEN

To dad--to Charlie!

ALL:

To Charlie.

They all drink. The music stops for a moment as the musicians come to the table to join the group.

MUSICIAN 1

Thanks for having us.

ALEINA

You're welcome. We love your music.

MUSICIAN 2

This is a great place.

ISRAEL

Where you all live?

MUSICIAN 3

We're on the road. We're Travelers.

ISRAEL

Thanks for being here.

MUSICIAN 4

This is the best feast we've seen in over a year.

ISRAEL

Where was the last one?

MUSICIAN 1

Garabaldi and that lot.

BLUE

Those evil trenchmouth losers?

JOHANNA

Hey--they're just people like you and me.

BLUE

Huh? They're nothing like you and me.

BEN
They've grabbed the last remaining
resources and they torture people.

JOHANNA
They don't torture people.

BEN
How would you know?

JOHANNA
I don't--I'm just guessing.

BEN
Well, guess something else.

ALEINA
Sit down Ben and everybody and
let's pass the platter. Micky, come
over here.

Micky pushes Blue down and sits next to Aleina.

SUSAN
Ben--sit down here with us!

BEN
Uh--ok.

Ben moves down next to Susan.

SUSAN
(whispering to Ben as he
sits)
I don't like that girl Johanna.

BEN
What?

SUSAN
She's a spy.

BEN
No she's not! Mom vetted
thoroughly! I trust my mom.

SUSAN
Ok. It's just--

BEN
Come--let's enjoy this meal.

SUSAN
Right.

The SOUND of a TICKING CLOCK. No one notices as the platter is passed around and everyone is eating and drinking. Chatter and talking is muffled as TICKING CLOCK gets louder and louder and then:

MUSIC UP: "LUNA"
BY ATTLAS FROM
SIREN EP

LATER: THE LIGHTS ARE LOW AND THE MUSICIANS ARE PLAYING PIANO--DRUMS--DANCE MUSIC. EVERYONE IS DRUNK AND SATED AND THEY ARE ALL ON THE FLOOR GYRATING AND DANCING.

VOICE

Think of what it might feel like if
God put his arms around you and
said welcome home.

MUSIC: SAX AND PIANO

Dancing continues.

VOICE (CONT'D)

What happens when the system has
broken down? What happens if you
get held in the embrace of the
pure?

As he speaks, Blue and Ben drift toward one another. Spotlight on them. They move close and dance, arms around each other. Everyone else gyrates in silence, oblivious to everything except the music and the rhythm.

END EPISODE TWO

EPISODE THREE

EXT. A BI GEZUNT/CAFE-BOOKSTORE - DAY

MUSIC UP: AL
HARAMIYA "ALAA
SAAD"

Ben, Micky and Bue are outside the cafe/bookstore dancing to the music playing on a small tape deck they've found and powered with a wind machine they've invented using fans.

ALLAT (means "Omnipotent") a newly arrive Pilgrim who has arrived with 2 others from Afghanistan, joins them and shows them some steps.

ALLAT
I know some musicians

BEN
Where are they?

ALLAT
I don't know. Everyone scattered when the drought came. Dead Pistachio trees, scarred river beds-- we could not eat. Water crisis drove the living out. Many, many died.

BEN
I know. They die here too.

ALLAT
I see.

BEN
I'll take you over to the mass graves. There's another group funeral next week.

ALLAT
That group--that does the burials-- they are fanatics, right?

BLUE
Stay away from them--they're completely crazy.

BEN
Especially that guy Maitlin. He's got ten wives or something.

BLUE
Look who's talking.

BEN
What?

ALLAT
Oh we have had men like that where I am from too.

BEN
They bury the bodies for free though.

BLUE
They just want to program your
mind.

BEN
Just like everybody, they want to
take over.

ALLAT
Why?

BEN
Because everybody thinks they got
the answer! Now--let's dance.

ALLAT
Dance! I show you some steps.

MUSIC UP: ALAA SAAD, "MEN WAIN"

As they dance, Aleina watches from the doorway.