

Bangalore Affair

John Bandler

A beach resort in the Caribbean finds a college student out to punish a notorious professor for causing his mother's death. In the process, he slips uncomfortably close to the professor's wife and daughter. Horrified by the family secrets he uncovers, he relents; struggles with undoing what he started. To no avail—his foray into revenge boomerangs. He is unable to choke off the unexpected twists and turns in the climactic outpour of fraud, incest, and murder.



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Bangalore Affair

A stage play in two acts, 104 pages

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BANGALORE AFFAIR -- A STAGE PLAY IN TWO ACTS

PLOT SUMMARY

A beach resort in the Caribbean finds a college student out to punish a notorious professor for causing his mother's death. In the process, he slips uncomfortably close to the professor's wife and daughter. Horrified by the family secrets he uncovers, he relents; struggles with undoing what he started. To no avail--his foray into revenge boomerangs. He is unable to choke off the unexpected twists and turns in the climactic outpour of fraud, incest, and murder.

CHARACTERS

LUCKY SCHWARTZ, 22
CAMILLE LEDERER, 17
BYRON LEDERER, her father, 51
ANGELA LEDERER, her mother, 36

TIME

2007

SETTING

A seaside hotel and vacation resort on a Caribbean island

PLACES

Beachfront, Patio, Bedroom, Second bedroom, Third bedroom

ACT I

Scene 1: Beach -- morning
Scene 2: Patio -- evening
Scene 3: Bedroom of Angela and Byron -- late evening
Scene 4: Beach -- sunrise, next day
Scene 5: Patio -- morning
Scene 6: Bedroom of Angela and Byron -- evening

ACT II

Scene 1: Camille's bedroom -- same evening
Scene 2: Lucky's bedroom -- minutes later
Scene 3: Bedroom of Angela and Byron -- late night
Scene 4: Beach -- predawn

ACT I SCENE 1: BEACH -- MORNING

A secluded end of the resort. It is hot, humid, tropical. The whoosh of the surf is heard rising and falling over the chatter of the birds.

CAMILLE, late teens, wears a cover-up over her bikini.
LUCKY, athletic, early twenties, is wearing a swimsuit; has a towel slung around his neck.

The curtain rises to reveal CAMILLE sitting on a beach chair under a thatched sunshade, reading a book. Beside her, on a low table, is her handbag, an open can of Diet Coke.

LUCKY enters, out of earshot of CAMILLE, speaking into a cell phone. He is patient but insistent, as if speaking to a child.

CAMILLE seems unaware of his presence.

LUCKY

(into the phone, occasionally glancing at CAMILLE)

The pills. Tobias. Every eight hours, remember?

(Listens.)

Even if you feel better, man. Please. Till they're done.

(Listens.)

Don't get worked up. Mom's dead. Seventeen years dead... Life in the slammer won't bring her back.

(Listens.)

Cool it, for God's sake. I love you, god damn it, I love you, but show your ass around here... So help me, with my bare knuckles.

(Listens.)

I'm handling it. I'm handling it, man. My way, Tobias.

(Listens.)

Call them... Give them my love... You too. Hey! Switching off... Text me.

He snaps the phone shut, takes a few deep breaths, approaches CAMILLE.

LUCKY

Camille is a lovely name.

CAMILLE

(looks up)

Hi.

LUCKY
Camille. It's a lovely name.
(Off her look.)
I overheard your mother calling you.

CAMILLE
(looks back into her book)
She didn't call, she yelled.

LUCKY
Right.

CAMILLE
I hate being yelled at.

LUCKY
Particularly in public.

CAMILLE
(looks at him again)
Anywhere.

LUCKY
You yelled back at her, though, something fierce.

CAMILLE
She so embarrasses me.

LUCKY
Mothers, right?

CAMILLE
Right. Does yours? I mean...

LUCKY
(pointing seaward)
You had a dip?

CAMILLE
It's way too hot.

LUCKY
The sea's cool.

CAMILLE
It's choppy.

LUCKY
How about diving? Be pretty calm underwater.
(Off her look.)
I saw you, the three of you, bristling with dive gear.

CAMILLE
I prefer to read when she's diving and to dive when she's reading.

LUCKY
She?

CAMILLE
My mom.

LUCKY
Angela.

CAMILLE
You remembered her name.

LUCKY
Hey, everyone within a mile of the dining room caught her name. For a full fifteen seconds your family duet held back the scavengers from filling their beaks.

CAMILLE
(shuts her book)
Are you referring to those ugly black birds hovering over the buffet, or to that Jewish free-for-all?

LUCKY
Oops.

CAMILLE
Shouldn't have said that, should I? Shoot! Perhaps I should have said 'engineers.' Engineers. Engineers do swarm buffets too, like there's no tomorrow.
(Beat.)
Oh shit. You're not Jewish. Say you're not Jewish.

LUCKY
Some say I'm more on the nerdisher side.

CAMILLE
Nerd? Who? Sorry. I'm like so-- You are Jewish.

LUCKY
Perhaps tomorrow.

CAMILLE
You're funny.

LUCKY
Today, me nerd, tomorrow, me Jew.

CAMILLE
Funny-funny.

LUCKY
When will you dive?

CAMILLE
When Dad perks up, or tires of staring at his laptop.

LUCKY

Your mom...?

CAMILLE

Oh, I guess she'll stay glued to the bar.

LUCKY

Today, I'd wager, you drove her there.

CAMILLE

Are you, like, siding with her?

LUCKY

Hey, be glad you have a mother.

CAMILLE

Right now, I'm glad to be as far away from her as possible.

LUCKY

So be my dive buddy. I'm in a really good mood today.

CAMILLE

I don't know you.

LUCKY

You prefer to dive with someone you know or with someone who's in a good mood?

CAMILLE

I prefer to dive with someone who's a good diver.

LUCKY

Who doesn't yell at you.

CAMILLE

More to the point, my dad won't be too pleased.

(Beat.)

What's your name?

LUCKY

Lucky Schwartz, Schwartz with a 't'.

CAMILLE

Go on!

LUCKY

Really.

CAMILLE

That sounds like a takeoff on Arnie Schwarzenegger.

LUCKY

Thanks...

CAMILLE

I'm Camille Lederer. Ouch. Doesn't that just make you wince? Lederer, Lederer, Lederhosen... I feel like a reject from a Bavarian tannery.

LUCKY

So say it the Yankee way. 'Lederer' is solid Teutonic, like Schwartz. But don't knock tanneries. Tandy Corporation, supplier of leather crap, famously owned Radio Shack.

(Beat.)

Wanna weep? Think 'Adolf Schicklgruber' alias Adolf Hitler.

An awkward silence.

CAMILLE

(holds out her hand)

Sorry. No bad feelings? Start over? Hi, Lucky, I'm Camille.

LUCKY

(shakes her hand)

Camille Lederer, I presume, daughter of the noted Professor Byron Lederer.

CAMILLE

Noted? Don't get me wrong, I love him dearly, but can you take a guy seriously who calls himself Byron, and still thinks long hair's in?

LUCKY

He's just published a ground-breaking paper.

CAMILLE

Don't tell anyone...but...according to Mom, it's about time. Say, you're not into that crap too, are you?

LUCKY

Well, I do love math.

CAMILLE

That's so 'yesterday.'

LUCKY

Really...

CAMILLE

I can't even add...

LUCKY

So...get a tutor.

CAMILLE

Had one. He gave up.

LUCKY

I've tutored difficult kids.

CAMILLE

You ain't met difficult yet, mister. I hate engineering mumbo jumbo...stability factors, adjoint somethings, convergence doodahs, and blah, blah, blah. I'm so, like, inundated by the stuff, what with Mom pretending to be a prof too, and nerdies hounding us day and night. Not that I care.

(Beat.)

Sometimes I want to kill her.

LUCKY

You can't not care and want to kill...

CAMILLE

Don't you ever think of killing someone?

LUCKY

All the time. But only because I care.

CAMILLE

Oh? Who, for instance?

LUCKY

Your boyfriend, for one. This morning, I took an instant disliking to him. Right now, I positively hate him.

CAMILLE

Don't. He ain't worth the effort. Anyway, he's not hanging around this time, thank God.

LUCKY

I don't have to meet a guy to know I hate him.

CAMILLE

I do.

LUCKY

So...why does a pretty girl dream of matricide?

CAMILLE

Matricide?

LUCKY

Yeah. Killing your mother.

CAMILLE

Hey, it's not because of some disgusting...Oedipus-type complex, if that's what you're thinking.

LUCKY

We all have one, don't we?

CAMILLE

Oedipus. Yuck.

(Takes a drink.)

How did we get to this subject? Matricide... I have a dream... I dream of matricide... Sounds like I'm willing my mattress to die while I'm asleep.

(Beat.)

You make me say such crap...

LUCKY

Crap.

CAMILLE

But I still don't know you.

LUCKY

That's easy. Invite me to sit down... We'll continue our discourse on race and religion, intolerance and mathematics, and the execution of our loved ones... There's always underwater exploration, as well as the general state of the universe as we know it.

CAMILLE

My folks won't be happy.

LUCKY

About?

CAMILLE

About you sitting next to me.

LUCKY

So don't give them a vote.

CAMILLE

Any moment now... You're going to, like, rope me into having lunch with you. Right?

LUCKY

Great. I feel hungry already.

CAMILLE

Watch it, buddy. There's two things Dad can't stand: smart alecks and gigolos... But if you came of good stock, he'd take you in a flash. That counts... Stock. And booze.

(Beat.)

Have you seen his belly?

Silence.

LUCKY

This is my first time here.

CAMILLE

Diving?

LUCKY

Or otherwise.

CAMILLE

Your deepwater dive? You did that in the freezing Atlantic?

LUCKY

Key West.

CAMILLE

Shoot! You're into math. And you're gay.

LUCKY

Sorry, that was all I could afford. Key West. My mother was a housemaid, from a long line of Austrian housemaids.

CAMILLE

Then, Mister Lucky Schwartz, you're plumb out of luck. Housemaid stock doesn't cut it in the Lederer household.

LUCKY

I once scored a hundred and fifty on an IQ test... Without cheating.

CAMILLE

No shit! That announcement would make matters worse, particularly if you kept bringing it up...

LUCKY

Let's dive.

CAMILLE

Uh-uh. You're not listening. My father won't even allow me within a mile of our dive-master... Even on his crappy boat... Go figure.

LUCKY

So...in summary, Camille... Without pre-approval, you don't chat with a guy, you don't break bread with a guy, you don't scuba with a guy...unless the guy's your long-haired, irritable dad who hates gigolos and intellectuals.

CAMILLE

You got it, dude.

LUCKY

Your approval is all I care for.
(Pause.)

CAMILLE

Dad won't let me out of his sight.

LUCKY

Ah-ha!

CAMILLE

What?

LUCKY

Have I missed something? You're out of his sight right now.

CAMILLE

I mean...diving.

LUCKY

What about your mom?

CAMILLE

Listen, I'm ever so glad you can put up with me. I can be quite disgusting... Confidentially, Mom will tolerate anything that stands over five feet tall, literate or illiterate, and doesn't out-yak her. You heard her. That covers a lot of possibilities.

LUCKY

Island boys?

CAMILLE

Long as they shower twice a day... She loathes filth.

LUCKY

(sucking in his belly)

So... Six feet of future self-made money will do?

CAMILLE

As long as you brush your teeth.

LUCKY

Aftershave?

CAMILLE

A hint's okay, but work on your mouth... Keep it shut.

LUCKY

Except to breathe.

CAMILLE

Uh-huh...but not in her face. Unless you're rich and you know how to wear a suit.

(Beat.)

How old are you?

LUCKY

Twenty-two.

CAMILLE

I'm eighteen... Nearly.

LUCKY

Last year at school?

CAMILLE

Not quite. I'm, like...slow, man. Can't hack math, what Mom and Dad want me to do. I'll get myself into psychology, help me figure out my bad self. You?

LUCKY

Right now, I'm a kind of broker.

CAMILLE

You sell homes...like, real estate and things?

LUCKY

I get to bring people together.

CAMILLE

Like...a matchmaker?

LUCKY

I connect dudes who want money with dudes who have money... 'Course, I get to keep some along the way.

CAMILLE

Then Mom will go gaga over you.

LUCKY

It's agreed, then. This afternoon, we'll check out our tanks and regulators, sink into the deep...blow bubbles. Buddies. An aqua Romeo and his aquatic Juliet in wet suits, rubbing flippers...weaving through eels, turtles, and nurse sharks.

CAMILLE

But...?

LUCKY

I'll take care of it. I'll make sure your folks take an emergency call. Just before the dive-boat sails...

CAMILLE

Cool. How long...? How long are you here for?

LUCKY

Long as it takes.

CAMILLE

Now and then, you make no sense. You're funny, though... Adorably funny. I'm starting to go for you.

(Looks down.)

As if you couldn't tell.

LUCKY

(kneels beside her)

I like you, liked you. Soon as I heard you were a Camille.

CAMILLE

Humdinger!

LUCKY

Even before your yell bounced off yonder boats.

CAMILLE

Hold on, Mr. Lucky Schwartz with a 't'. You said you spotted me with my dive gear. So, why didn't you like me then?

LUCKY

I hadn't heard you yell.

CAMILLE

Screw-ball. I'm here for two weeks.

LUCKY

Then I'd better sit down.

CAMILLE

(reaches for her bag)

Mmm... How about a joint?

LUCKY

Put that away. It'll be rough at sea this afternoon. You'll be sick as a dog.

CAMILLE

(puts down her bag)

Yuck. You're starting to sound grumpy, like my dad.

LUCKY sets his towel on the sand, sits beside her.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Well, at least you're handy at keeping the beach boys away. No one's come near us.

LUCKY

Maybe I prepaid them...to get things done.

CAMILLE

You what?

LUCKY

Or maybe I convinced the drug honcho I'd feed him to the sharks.

(Leaps to his feet, bows.)

For you...my pleasure.

CAMILLE

(looks up at him)

Geez, you look so ludicrously serious when you talk stupid. Should I be afraid of you?

LUCKY

Like me instead.

CAMILLE

(takes a drink)

I like your hair.

LUCKY

I love your smile.

CAMILLE

Do you have a car? Here, I mean.

LUCKY

Sure.

CAMILLE

You can take me out in it, if you like.

LUCKY

I thought you were scared.

CAMILLE

Well, I do have these stupid nightmares about falling into murky waters that are absolutely seething with killer fish.

LUCKY

I'd worry more about other drivers.

CAMILLE

You mean, divers.

LUCKY

No. Drivers. You wanted me to take you out in my car. Diving is still under negotiation.

Silence.

CAMILLE

You know how when you think really, really hard about wanting to do something, and you just know you'll have all these nightmares later on about not having done it...? Am I, like, making sense...? Well, we've talked so much shit, I guess we'll just have to go out now, won't we?

LUCKY

To ward off our nightmares.

CAMILLE

(extends her hand)

See? I'm terrified.

LUCKY

Of big fish? Or not doing what you really want to do?

CAMILLE

For one thing... You seem kind of tense.

LUCKY

Tense.

CAMILLE

Freak-out tense. Like, back then, on your cell, was that your girlfriend you were breaking up with?

LUCKY

Breaking up?

CAMILLE

Arguing.

LUCKY

That was my brother.

CAMILLE

Brother.

LUCKY

Right. He's kind of bad at following his doctor's orders.

(Takes her hand.)

Okay? That's one thing. What's another?

CAMILLE

If I let you out of my sight for one...just one horribly long second--

LUCKY

You mightn't see me again?

CAMILLE

If I let you go, I'd suddenly wake up...and I'd... I think I'd really miss you.

(Beat.)

Oh, Jesus. You look worried. Have I said something wrong?

Dark.

SCENE 2: PATIO -- EVENING

Steel drum music plays in the background.

BYRON, early fifties, unfit, unkempt, wears an aloha shirt over slacks. LUCKY wears shorts and a short-sleeve tee-shirt.

Seated, LUCKY and BYRON face each other across a table, over a liquor bottle and two glasses, an ash tray filled with stubbed-out cigarettes. On the table: a slim folder, a business card.

BYRON, nervous, smokes and drinks.

LUCKY

Let's say...I can connect you with one of the primes.

BYRON

Boeing, Raytheon, General Dynamics...?

LUCKY

First, there's security clearance.

BYRON

No problem. I have D.o.D. clearance.

LUCKY

New rules... Sorry.
(Pause.)

BYRON

Whose?

LUCKY

(apologetically)
Actually...mine. It's my project.
(Pause.)

BYRON

Yours? You said it was Defense. Why can't you connect me with the prime contractor directly?

LUCKY puts his glass to his lips,
returns it to the table.

LUCKY

Would your travel agent simply fax you hotel phone numbers instead of himself making your reservations?

BYRON

Travel agent?

LUCKY

Just trying to be funny...

BYRON

Funny? This is not the time for funny.

LUCKY

I told you, I'm a broker...

BYRON

(takes a drink)

Is this another Star Wars program?

LUCKY

Let's say, as yet unannounced.

BYRON

(hushed, leaning forward)

Let's say...a new Strategic Defense Initiative?

LUCKY

Apparently, your family's *Deutsche Staatsbürgerschaft*...if not the contributions of your factories to the *Führer's* cause...doesn't give you a leg up on this one.

BYRON

That's old news.

(Pause.)

LUCKY

You were born in Argentina.

BYRON

Well-documented... I'm a citizen. I have clearance.

(Downs his drink.)

So...? What else?

LUCKY

About the Lederer dynasty, a fair bit. If you like, I can tell you what else I know.

BYRON

That won't be necessary. Old hat. Have a drink.

(Pours from the bottle.)

On the other hand, I do want you to explain your special interest in my family.

LUCKY

I'm doing a doctorate.

BYRON

You're a student?

LUCKY

My proposed work covers an inter-disciplinary mix of the neurosciences, psychology, management engineering, business, and mathematics. I'd like to develop relevant mathematical models of cognition, of the cognitive processes. State of the art. You see?

BYRON

(bangs his glass on the table)

I see, and I don't see. Mathematics and cognition: contradictions, surely. If you're a mathematician, you could as easily do this project yourself. How do I know you're not going to steal my proposal, my ideas? Or perhaps the prime will do the work inhouse. Perhaps sub it to someone else.

LUCKY

This is what makes my project so interesting. The psychology. The possibilities.

BYRON

What's to stop you?

LUCKY

I've got other goals...

BYRON

Like cognition? Young man, you've been taken in. Find another project. This one smells of a Bertrand-Russell-style leftist hoax.

LUCKY

You shouldn't be so modest, sir. It's your own work... Surely you see...it provides the very foundation of my program. Its promise of enormous computational power...

BYRON

(puffing with pride)

Theory. Just a theoretical curiosity, albeit award-winning and a feather in my academic hat... Your enthusiasm is...charming. But it's carrying you away.

LUCKY

Some academics apparently have it in for you. The complaints...

BYRON picks up the folder.

BYRON

Mere envy. All you have shown me, in here, is a reprint of my own original paper.

LUCKY

Right.

BYRON

Mathematical models of cognition. Show me references, citations. Who's behind all this?

LUCKY

Me.

(Pause.)

It's in my thesis. There are military implications, hence, the D.o.D.

(Pause.)

BYRON

You told me you just started.

LUCKY

Not my doctoral thesis. That was my undergraduate thesis, for which they awarded me a concurrent master's degree. Special dispensation.

BYRON

You don't say. But I still don't understand why you insist on showing me my own paper.

LUCKY

I have some questions. I've circled the parts of interest.

BYRON picks up the business card, looks at it.

BYRON

"LS Intelec Inc., Lucky Schwartz, President." What kind of name is Lucky?

LUCKY

I decided 'Lukas' was too Mafia.

BYRON puts down the card. Drinks.

BYRON

'Lucky' isn't far off. I'll look you up, you know. Where are you based? MIT, Harvard...?

LUCKY

I'm real enough. We shook hands.

BYRON

Aren't you a bit on the green side, your double degree notwithstanding?

LUCKY

I'm in training... On the job. On site.

BYRON

On site, eh?

LUCKY

I officially start my graduate program in September.

BYRON

The D.o.D., clearly, has been hijacked by its own fanatics...
Pentagon lunatics, the lot.

(Beat.)

If I understand the situation correctly, sir, you've been given the official go-ahead to orchestrate a specific R&D contract...to broker it, as you say...and to study me and my family's reactions to my contributions, like we were guinea pigs. You are then to include the nonsense in your thesis. Don't tell me. You even propose to scan our brains. Correct?

LUCKY

Well... Only with your consent... Part of the full project. New imperatives.

BYRON

(stubs out his cigarette)

The devil take the Defense Department, and its new imperatives.

He reaches for another cigarette.
Offers one to LUCKY, who refuses.

BYRON (CONT'D)

I'm impressed by your accent, Mr. Schwartz.

LUCKY

I've been speaking English since I was five.

BYRON

Five.

LUCKY

Since my brother and I left Germany.

BYRON

In...?

LUCKY

In 1990, six months after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

CAMILLE enters, dressed in a blouse and semi-transparent skirt. She stops behind BYRON, signals LUCKY, wondering why he is talking to her father.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Seventeen years ago. I guess, the very year your Camille was born.

CAMILLE taps her wrist, puts a finger to her mouth, draws a circle with her hand, then acts like she's behind the steering wheel of a car.

LUCKY nods.

BYRON turns, sees CAMILLE.

CAMILLE

Evening, all.

BYRON

There you are, my dear. Say hello to Mr. Schwartz.

CAMILLE

Hello, Mr. Schwartz with a 't'.

LUCKY stands briefly, then sits again.

LUCKY

Hello again, Camille.

BYRON

(to LUCKY)

You two, I take it, have already been introduced.

CAMILLE

When you missed the boat this afternoon, Dad, Lucky offered to be my diving buddy. He's so fun. I promised I'd dive with him tomorrow too.

BYRON

(to LUCKY)

Damned staff. Everyone who's even half competent and speaks decent English, has already abandoned this Godforsaken island. This morning, the idiots at the front desk sent me on a wild goose chase... Something about an emergency. It never materialized... In fact, a free ride to the airport was included by a drug-pusher taxi driver... He pretended he understood nothing but pigeon English. I guess I should thank you for bringing my wayward daughter back in one piece.

(To CAMILLE.)

Did you know that Mr. Schwartz is doing his doctorate on us? Apparently, if we allow him, we are to be his guinea pigs. It seems he is combining the personal aspect with the professional in his so-called doctoral study. Be circumspect about what you divulge. He wants to scan our brains.

CAMILLE

(surprised)

Lucky didn't mention anything about guinea pigs, students, or brain scans. He's a broker.

LUCKY

I bring people together, remember? A middleman.

CAMILLE

(unsure whether to be annoyed)

A middleman who scans brains?

(To Byron, flippantly.)

Oh, shoot! I think I un-circumspectly divulged that Mom craves upscale, that you don't mind dump-scale, that we ended up here as a compromise. I may have confessed my age too. Oh, and we chatted about Granddad's favorite subject--

BYRON

Camille!

CAMILLE

Something they can check into while they scan your brain--

BYRON

Camille! Get out of here!

CAMILLE

Has my dad complained about his heart, yet? His brain isn't his only problem. He's supposed to relax. Doctor's orders.

(To LUCKY.)

Maybe you can convince him.

BYRON

Camille, please!

(To LUCKY.)

Now you understand what we have on our hands. If I didn't firmly believe she would burn down our house, I would send her home on the next plane. In the old days, she would have been flogged. Flogged. Do you believe in flogging, Mr. Schwartz? Off the record, of course.

Unseen by BYRON, CAMILLE puts her hands together, tilts her head against them. Signals sleep.

LUCKY nods.

BYRON (CONT'D)

(turns to CAMILLE, annoyed)

Why are you two signaling to each other? Really, Camille, you can see we're discussing something important. Do something useful. Go make up with your mother.

CAMILLE

See you again, Mr. Schwartz. Soon.

As CAMILLE exits, LUCKY waves to her.

BYRON looks at her until she is gone.

BYRON

Where were we...?

(Fills his glass.)

LUCKY

By the way, Professor Lederer, it is my understanding that the cost of failure could be prohibitive.

BYRON

(gulps his drink)

Don't listen to Camille.

(Leans across the table.)

My failure? That means my contribution is critical. How much do you think I should soak them for...?

(Straightens up. Beat.)

Just a joke. Not to be taken seriously.

LUCKY

Don't hold me to it, but I'd go for seven figures min, per phase. If you succeed, your prestige will be infinite. If your process fails...

BYRON

You shouldn't use 'infinite' with such abandon, sir. Why, pray, is your contact so sure I can succeed...?

LUCKY

(points at the folder)

He isn't, other than your new modeling technique is already referred to by researchers as the 'Lederer phantom machine,' and your peers are scrambling for techniques to attach their names to. Competing techniques.

(Pause.)

BYRON

May I confess something...? I was the first to be surprised by my paper's impact.

LUCKY

(points at the folder)

Figure 9. You must demonstrate that result at the end of phase one. A Matlab implementation will do. Problem is, equation 18 seems to have a few typos... I believe the typesetters repeated part of equation 17...by mistake, probably. Oh, and your theory depends on the mapping being invertible, the one defined in equation 3. Perhaps we can discuss it... I marked things up. Tomorrow okay?

BYRON

(annoyed)

Tomorrow, tomorrow. No one seems to have noticed I'm on a bloody vacation.

LUCKY

I won't take more than a few minutes. Promise. Look, a sketch is all I need right now. You'll get my preliminary okay. Then my contact will rubber stamp it, I'm sure.

BYRON

Your okay?

LUCKY

And whether or not to put out tenders to alternate experts...

BYRON pulls out a handkerchief, mops his brow.

BYRON

But I invented the bloody process. The Chinese Academy recognized me with an award: "Most Promising Theoretical Contribution of the Year." Highly prestigious.

LUCKY

The Chinese. They were the only ones, though, who recognized you, but that's enough for the D.o.D. bloodhounds. In spite of the complaints, you know, that you left out key steps... Perhaps for commercial advantage, now certainly to our advantage... Or the concept is flawed. Your critics insist your paper should never have been published.

BYRON

Sore losers, all of them!

ANGELA approaches, followed by CAMILLE.

ANGELA, late thirties, is dressed for dinner in an island dress, showy earrings, necklace, bracelets, makeup.

ANGELA

(German pronunciation and accent)

Who's a sore loser, *Liebchen*?

BYRON

(German accent, 'g' pronounced as in 'angle' with emphasis on 'e', pronounced 'eh')

Angela!

ANGELA

(extends her hand to LUCKY)

Aha...so this is Mr. Lucky Schwartz. A handsome name for a handsome man...still with fresh wind in his sails, no?

LUCKY rises, shakes her hand.

LUCKY
(in flawless German)
Frau Lederer, gnädige Frau.

ANGELA
(German pronunciation and
accent)
Angela, bitte. It has more flair, don't you think? Are we
all ready for dinner, then...? You will join us, Mr. Lucky?
(Glances at CAMILLE.)
I know all about you, already, but...
(Turns to LUCKY.)
...you must tell me more.
(Links arms with LUCKY.)
You dance?

Everyone exits.

Dark.

SCENE 3: BEDROOM OF ANGELA AND BYRON -- LATE EVENING

Typical bedroom for a Caribbean resort: king-size bed, floral bedspreads and drapes. On the walls: local art, seascapes, tropical vegetation, village life. A table, chairs, bedside tables, lamps, wicker furnishings. A large mirror on the wall. A laptop stands on the table. The room is made up.

BYRON sits on the bed. On his bedside table, a bottle of pills, open liquor bottle. LUCKY'S folder is on the bed.

ANGELA enters, slings her handbag onto the bed, looks into the mirror, slowly takes off her jewelry.

ANGELA

"My Blue Heaven." Our own blue heaven. Our very first days. Remember? Our own new world. Right here. We never left our bed, except to let the maid change the sheets. Room service had to slide our food under that door. Of course, broken this, broken that. But I adored you. I trusted you, Byron. I rejected everything people said about you. Everything.

BYRON

I need to be alone.

ANGELA

The heat. The sweat. Those days, nights. The moon-lit dance floor. Those drums.

BYRON

Liebchen. This is not the time.

ANGELA

You're quite a fine dancer, you know.

BYRON

I beg you.

ANGELA

Liebchen. Yes. Then this *Liebchen* loses Byron's respect.

BYRON

Out.

ANGELA

Manage at least a small trifle of it for yourself, perhaps, in front of our guest, perhaps even, in front of your own daughter?

BYRON

Get out.

ANGELA

What? Go home? Cut short? Again? This time, you go. I need a holiday.

BYRON

And I need to be alone.

ANGELA

And tonight, what a spectacle.

(Turns back to the mirror.)

You owe me. For all the times I picked you off the floor.

BYRON

Shut up!

(Pause.)

ANGELA

Every time is the last time. Right, *Liebchen*? And every time has a reason. Always a reason. So, what is it this time? No, I already know.

BYRON

Angela!

ANGELA

He's everything you're not, and he has his life ahead of him.

BYRON

You don't understand.

ANGELA

Understand? Understand? Take comfort. Camille and her new friend only think of you as a has-been. It could be worse.

BYRON

Enough!

ANGELA

I will not be humiliated, not by you, not by anyone.

BYRON

The two of you couldn't keep your hands off him. 'Lucky' this, 'Lucky' that.

ANGELA

And your response? To demand attention. How? By clever talk? By being a nice host? No, by falling off your chair, not once, but twice, then having to be carried to your room.

(Pause.)

BYRON

Why do you think he's here, all by himself?

ANGELA

A man of your age. Pathetic.

BYRON

You're so clever, Angela. Why is he here? Why a resort like this, pretending to be on vacation, all on his own?

ANGELA

He couldn't possibly be here to enjoy himself, could he? He's here just to see you, so that, once again, you'll be the center of someone's attention.

(Pause.)

BYRON

It's a trap, don't you see?

ANGELA

A trap? Only you could imagine you're that important.

(Beat.)

So now that you show yourself as paranoid as well as stupid, why not get on the phone, and onto the Internet. Find out who he really is. Have you done that yet?

(Turns to look at him.)

You're afraid of him... Now this is new. I believe you're really afraid of him.

BYRON

(points at the folder)

Look in there.

ANGELA

What?

BYRON

The paper.

ANGELA

Why should I look at a paper? Is it about sore losers again? Mr. Schwartz doesn't look like a loser. He's charming.

BYRON

He wants us to discuss my work, him and me, tomorrow.

ANGELA

Your work. Always your work. So...tell him to wait until you get back to your office. Let him make the appointment with your secretary.

BYRON

He hinted at a subcontract to explore my theory. Big bucks.

ANGELA

Good for him. Good for you. You wanted recognition. You got it. God knows, we have money enough for everything we could possibly need, but no, you want it all, you ache for recognition. Well, you have it. What next?

BYRON

There's a hitch.

ANGELA

Fix it.

BYRON

Fix it, she says, fix it. Like the heel of your shoe, Angela? You want me to fix it like the broken heel of your fucking shoe?

ANGELA

(walks to the bathroom door)

I have no time for this.

BYRON

Come back here!

ANGELA

(stops, looks around)

Don't order me around, Mister Silver Spoon. Your own father warned me against you. No wonder no one wanted you as a husband.

BYRON

Oh yeah? You clawed your way to the front of the line.

ANGELA

(returns to the bed)

Housemaids and hookers--

BYRON

I'm in trouble, Angela.

ANGELA

Of course you are, baby, and you want Mommy to fix it for you. A poor, uneducated nobody like me. Right? I have to fix what my tragic Mister Einstein can't fix for himself. Perhaps you have a hole in your sock, darling? Well, Einstein didn't wear socks. Copy him. You copy everyone else. I don't fix holes in socks.

BYRON

When I met you, that's all you were good for.

ANGELA

Stick your prick in it.

BYRON

At least my family hasn't disowned me. Now, save the shit, shut up and listen. This is serious.

ANGELA

Everything that involves you, *Schätzchen*, is always terribly serious. And the world comes to a full stop for you.

Silence.

BYRON

Remember Bangalore...?

ANGELA

Bangalore. Are you joking? That's when I found out how you gave me that infection, when you owned up to your whoring, when you burst into tears, like you always do when caught, and you promised me you'd never do it again. That Bangalore?
(Pause.)

BYRON

We sat next to a guy...

ANGELA

Oh, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

BYRON

Will you listen?

ANGELA

(pacing)

Jesus, now I'm about to find out -- am I not? -- that I'm in for an even more hideous infection. My God, and here we find ourselves, once again, in need of urgent medical attention, while stuck in another Third World ass-hole--

BYRON

Stop this!

ANGELA picks up the folder.

ANGELA

Bangalore, you say. This time you fucked a guy for cash, or rather, he fucked you. This is the medical report? You have AIDS?

BYRON

I wish.

ANGELA

Moron! No one wishes for AIDS.

(Opens the folder.)

What kind of game are you playing? This is your paper.

BYRON

Once again, you demonstrate the attention span of a microbe. You think you know the whole story, huh? Well, this time you're in for a giant surprise.

ANGELA thumbs through the manuscript, tosses it onto the bed.

ANGELA

Big deal. You won a prize for work that's wrong.

BYRON

I wish.

ANGELA

You say 'I wish' once more, I'll ram this crap down your throat.

BYRON

I bought the original from that guy in Bangalore. The banquet. He sat next to me. Remember?

(Pause.)

ANGELA

Yes... Who can forget that toothy grin?

(Beat.)

Next year, we bumped into him in Bali.

BYRON

That's where I paid him, after the paper's acceptance. Cash. The rest of the twenty K.

ANGELA

So?

BYRON

So, I don't understand it.

ANGELA

You don't understand why you bought it? I understand. You've done it before, baby. The Indian won't keep his mouth shut? He wants more money? Pay him.

BYRON

You didn't hear me.

ANGELA

Try me again.

BYRON

How was I to know that the buggger's work would stir up so much interest? Anyway, he held something back or he deliberately wrote in some errors. He cheated me.

ANGELA

I get it. You don't have AIDS, but you're screwed, anyway.

(Beat.)

Hold it. Before we go one step further, tell me right now you don't have AIDS.

BYRON

Keep your voice down.

ANGELA

Say it.

BYRON

I don't have AIDS.

ANGELA

Get yourself tested.

BYRON

I don't need to, damn it!
(Pause.)

ANGELA

So find the prick and pay him some more.

BYRON

Schwartz wants to discuss the paper tomorrow. In detail.

ANGELA

Put him off. You're sick, as everyone has noticed. Camille will dive with him. And I'll keep him busy. Tennis. That's it. Between us, Lucky will have the time of his life.

BYRON

They'll fire me.

ANGELA

Oh yes, the university. And your father. This new fiasco should please him no end. The academic son he always wished for, the kindergarten bully, who cheated his way through high school, then bought his own university degrees... *Herr Doktor Professor Lederer*... Soon to be trashed by a second-rate American university. Of course, he'll write you out of his will. He warned me about that. No fear. Camille will get everything. Camille... That's the gold-digger's game... What did she say...? Yes, Mr. Lucky transfers money from the rich to the poor... Or is it the other way around?... And he keeps some for himself. Well, with that much money at stake, Lucky's investment in this vacation is peanuts!

BYRON

What do you suggest?

ANGELA

Dry yourself out. Get your ass onto the phone. Check the Internet. Find out about Schwartz. Search out your Bangalore Indian. Tell him you'll make it known that you inadvertently left him out of his paper. Tell him he is to come forward to take credit for his effort, partial credit, and...for his continuing cooperation and silence, you'll buy him a professorship in America. What do they call those highfalutin' boondoggles? Endowed chairs...? Listen, you can still turn this into another feather in your cap.

BYRON

How do I explain the errors? That I put them there myself?

ANGELA

How do you know there are errors? Because some upstart you're afraid of pointed them out?

BYRON

Come to think of it, he just hinted.

ANGELA

You fool!

BYRON

If I'm to believe this Schwartz, there's national security issues at stake. He went so far as to suggest it might serve to our advantage, to the national advantage, that my work appeared as it did -- flawed. What if this Indian starts a bidding war for the full theory? Perhaps, he's working on it right now, or he's sold it to a foreign power. If this work is so important, the CIA has already located him. I'm out of my depth. Totally. Whatever happens, my career is kaput.

ANGELA

Your career? Again, it comes back to your career?

BYRON

Stop yelling.

ANGELA

Shame on you. Shame on us. Once this mess gets out, I can't ever show my face anywhere.

BYRON

You brought it on yourself...what with your prancing about on every possible occasion...lording it over everyone.

ANGELA goes to the mirror, puts on her jewelry.

A long silence.

ANGELA

Camille is with him. If I suspected nothing, she knows less. Besides, she'll be real nice to him, which is exactly what we want. While I work on his price, he'll have the time of his life. And you, for once in our marriage, will do exactly what I tell you to do.

Dark.

SCENE 4: BEACH -- SUNRISE, NEXT DAY

The whoosh of surf is heard rising and falling over the chatter of the birds.

LUCKY, barefoot, in shorts and tee-shirt, sits on the sand near an empty beach chair, knees drawn up, his head on his knees.

ANGELA, in swimsuit and beach coat, arrives, stops beside him.

ANGELA

Can't sleep...?

LUCKY

The birds woke me. I guess they didn't want me to miss the view.

ANGELA

Even after a late night?

LUCKY

I'm a morning person. The slightest noise wakes me up. Or light. Then, that's it for sleep.

ANGELA

Sunrise. Best time of day, as long as you don't have a hangover.

LUCKY

I suppose you're used to views like this, beaches washed clean overnight by the sea.

ANGELA pulls up the beach chair, sits down.

ANGELA

You look like a lost little boy.
(Pause.)

LUCKY

I love the feel of the sand.

ANGELA

Where do you vacation?

LUCKY

I usually work.

ANGELA

I mean, where else have you been besides Aspen and the Keys?

LUCKY
London... And Bavaria and the Tyrol.
(Pause.)

ANGELA
I married my husband in Munich.

LUCKY
I know. Camille told me.

ANGELA
What else did she tell you? She has such a wild imagination.

LUCKY
Generic stuff. Turns out she was born the year I left
Germany.

ANGELA
Generic? Nonsense. She doesn't do generic. You don't do
generic. Tell me...more about yourself.

LUCKY
My brother and I... We grew up in Patterson, New Jersey,
with foster parents.

ANGELA
Foster parents. They did well. There was so much noise last
night, and perhaps you already told me. What does your
brother do?

LUCKY
Landscaping.

ANGELA
He owns a business?

LUCKY
Tobias? Too low on the totem-pole... Undercut by illegals.

ANGELA
I see... When do you finish your studies?

LUCKY
In about three years...

ANGELA
Then, teaching, research, business?

LUCKY
Mostly research, I guess.

ANGELA

From what I've seen, companies will scramble to hire you.

(Pause.)

I looked you up on the Internet, you know. Why didn't you tell us -- it takes only minutes to find out -- that you were the guy who started the Lucky Math Workshop? Your mother--

(Beat.)

Sorry.

LUCKY

It's the easiest thing in the world for a bright kid, a motivated kid with money, to find a coach. It's harder to help under-performers from dead-beat families, kids ready to drop out. Anyway, I dove into an argument with some hot-shots at Starbucks. One of them turned out to be a rabbi. "Give it a try," he said. "I'll get you the space." Stupidly, I agreed.

ANGELA

Stupidly? Because you sacrificed your sophomore year?

LUCKY

I had to go to Cleveland. To the rabbi's synagogue. My job was to round up as many kids as I could, get the classes going, shame mentors into chipping in... Critical mass. That was important.

ANGELA

All this happened...when?

LUCKY

Five years ago.

ANGELA

You were a sophomore five years ago?

LUCKY

I started college when I was sixteen.

ANGELA

Apparently, PBS did a program on your technique. A full hour.

LUCKY

Team spirit... That's what counts, with lots of redundancy built in... Letting the already skilled teach the less skilled. Kind of a pyramid scheme of mentoring, loose, redundant, but energized.

ANGELA

I understand energized. I don't understand loose and redundant.

LUCKY

The secret is to have overlaps, overlapping connections, lots of them, so the system doesn't collapse when a few key players drop out. For one thing, to get out from under it...my exit strategy...I had to make sure the whole thing didn't depend on me personally.

(Pause.)

ANGELA

Did you appear on TV?

LUCKY

What PBS, and that blog you just quoted, didn't mention...what I didn't want them to say...was that I got royally roughed up. The gangs didn't like the competition. I was on the front line.

(Pause.)

ANGELA

Lucky.

LUCKY

Yes.

ANGELA

Have you told Camille about this?

LUCKY

No.

ANGELA

(touches his shoulder)

But you decided to share yourself with me.

LUCKY

Yes.

ANGELA

Did you have to put up with a lot, as a kid, I mean?

LUCKY

If I didn't get punched out for being German I got punched out for being a Jew... As you can imagine, I lost my accent pretty quickly.

ANGELA

They still do that to Germans?

LUCKY

Our Reich was supposed to last a thousand years. Well, with all the footage and digital restoration, its memory will. For sure.

ANGELA

Are you Jewish?

LUCKY

Only on certain days.

ANGELA

Why...? Why provoke with foolish word-games...? So, on which days do you turn Jewish?

LUCKY

Definitely on the days I'm punched out for it.

ANGELA

Tell me about your brother.

LUCKY

He's a street-fighter.

ANGELA

What do I sense in you? Anger...? Passion...? You know you made quite an impression...yesterday.

LUCKY

Yesterday.

(Pause.)

ANGELA

I said, you made quite an impression...

LUCKY

I like Camille.

ANGELA

She's difficult, like me, no? What I mean, Mr. Schwartz, you made an impression on everyone.

LUCKY

It's my fault. Professor Lederer did seem a bit stressed out last night. What with this being the start of his vacation.

ANGELA

I mean, you made an impression on everyone...

LUCKY

Right. I do annoy people.

ANGELA

I mean, I stopped by your room this morning.

LUCKY

Camille...?

ANGELA

Was fast asleep in her bed. I made sure.
(Pause.)

LUCKY

I don't--

ANGELA

Understand? About your room number? The front desk accepts my money too, Mr. Schwartz.

LUCKY

You mean, the wild goose chase?

ANGELA

Yesterday's drug-pusher tour of the island's worst roads in a car from the stone-age. Remember? When do you plan to apologize for that?

(Pause.)

LUCKY

Does Professor Lederer--?

ANGELA

My husband is too wrapped up in higher things. Like you.

LUCKY

Sorry.

ANGELA

Don't play simple with me.

LUCKY

You're right to be angry.

ANGELA

Maybe yes, maybe no. Let's say, under the terrible noise and commotion last night, during the chaos that passes for dancing here, you checked me out...

LUCKY

You...led me on.

ANGELA

And not only with your eyes.

LUCKY

You didn't say stop.

ANGELA

You didn't notice my surprise?

LUCKY

You didn't pull back.

ANGELA

Do I have to write it down for you, word for word, in block letters?

LUCKY

Okay. What you're telling me is...you found yourself outside my room this morning. Right?

ANGELA

A good start!

LUCKY

Street-side, next to the parking lot, ground floor, new wing?

ANGELA

Do you have any other rooms?

LUCKY

Just checking.

ANGELA

Go on.

LUCKY

And you knocked on my door.

ANGELA

What else would I do after I arrive at your door, and find it locked?

(Pause.)

LUCKY

What time was that?

ANGELA

Close to five.

LUCKY

And I didn't answer because I was already here, sitting on the beach, instead of lying in my bed. Correct?

ANGELA

(her hand on his shoulder)

Tomorrow, at what time will you be waiting for me...?

LUCKY

At five o'clock...

ANGELA

Where?

LUCKY

In my room, ground floor, next to the parking lot.

ANGELA

And then?

LUCKY

And then...I guess I'll invite you in.

ANGELA

That would help.

LUCKY
I'll ask you, of course, why you came. We'll talk.

ANGELA
Talk?

LUCKY
Yeah.

ANGELA
Talk.

LUCKY
Right. I'd like that.

ANGELA
It's my turn to be surprised. And disappointed. I thought you were a mathematician. You missed an important step. You're so busy guessing and worrying about the predictable that you missed a step.

LUCKY
You won't be alone. Camille...?

ANGELA
(slaps his head)
Uh-uh. This small drama is between you and me. Always was.

LUCKY
Perhaps I should start over.

ANGELA
Perhaps. A morning person should indeed be more fully awake. No? It seems I must help you. In any organization, what does the janitor have in common with the chief officer?

LUCKY
The janitor... Keys!

ANGELA
I told you, be very careful. On this island, in fact, anywhere we find ourselves, my money's as good as yours.

LUCKY
It's my turn to be impressed.

ANGELA
Good. Now that we have that little thing out of the way, you can explain how you teach probability and statistics.

LUCKY
What?

ANGELA
They say, you can prove anything with statistics.

LUCKY

No... Hold on. You're about to impress me again, right?

ANGELA

You tell me...

LUCKY

Okay. Say, if...nine times out of ten...when you randomly poke your head into a receptionist's area, you find that she's filing her nails--

ANGELA

Why 'receptionist'?

LUCKY

Only a for instance.

ANGELA

What then?

LUCKY

Then you can be darn sure she's not working most of the time.

ANGELA

I might just say she liked to look attractive. Anyhow, if this is your 'statistics,' then what is 'probability'?

LUCKY

Here, it's an estimate of how likely the receptionist will be caught filing her nails next time someone enters her space.

ANGELA

The same receptionist, again?

LUCKY

The same.

ANGELA

What if she only ever filed her nails when she expected to see no one else but this person you called 'you'?

LUCKY

It's assumed she acts randomly.

ANGELA

Yes, by someone who wasn't carefully listening to you, and who doesn't know women. Only the 'you' in your story arrived into her area randomly. You said nothing about whether she might have a good ear for footsteps, and would know that the 'you' was you, and that she had her own personal agenda.

LUCKY

Huh, I'm impressed... Is your take somehow related to you having, or apparently having, a key to my room?

ANGELA

About that possibility, dear boy, I will let you sweat. For our own next time, I don't need a bimbo in a story to understand an idea.

LUCKY

Never again.

(Pause.)

ANGELA

Never assume a woman works randomly on her beauty.

LUCKY

Randomly acting receptionists are hereby struck from my thoughts.

ANGELA rises, takes off her cover-up.

ANGELA

Could you, Mister Probability and Statistics, have yesterday even dared to imagine that I would allow your hands on me in public, that I would possess the key to your room by today, and that you might find the two of us in it tomorrow morning...? Have I expressed myself clearly?

LUCKY

I 'might find'?

ANGELA

Uh-huh. Before then, anything can happen.

(Pause.)

LUCKY

This 'anything' sounds problematic.

ANGELA

Uh-huh.

LUCKY

This...these, anything-events, I take it, won't be random.

ANGELA

You have only twenty-four hours to sweat... Be glad...

LUCKY

Why did you stop me?

ANGELA

Last night? Your urge to climb under my dress became too obvious. Besides, why does a trainer hold back the sugar?

(Pause.)

LUCKY

I'll change rooms.

ANGELA
You won't.

(Pause.)

LUCKY
I'm unpredictable.

ANGELA
(reaches out)
Come... A swim before breakfast.

Silence.

Slowly, LUCKY slips off his tee-shirt.

Dark.

SCENE 5: PATIO -- MORNING

Under an umbrella, a table cleared except for a coffee pot and juice. Nearby stands a buffet with platters of food. The whoosh of surf rises and falls over the chatter of the birds.

LUCKY, still in shorts and tee-shirt, sits at the table. ANGELA, in a tennis outfit, sits opposite. On the floor is her athletic bag.

LUCKY
(looks at his watch)
We've missed the morning dive.

ANGELA
Camille sleeps in. If you want to dive with her in the mornings, don't keep her up late.
(Sips from her coffee cup.)
I booked us a tennis court for nine o'clock, before the sun gets too hot...

LUCKY
What do you want?

ANGELA
A game of tennis...

LUCKY
I don't--

ANGELA
Before the sun gets too hot...

LUCKY
You ribbed me earlier. About pasting what you wanted me to say, right into my mouth.

ANGELA
Block letters...

LUCKY
Yeah.

ANGELA
Okay. Have you ever been in love with a married woman?

LUCKY
God!

ANGELA
Are you in love with such a woman now?

LUCKY

Such a woman?

ANGELA

Is my English so bad?

LUCKY

It's not your English I have trouble with.

ANGELA

Being in love with a married woman is addictive, worse than cocaine.

LUCKY

Why not just ask whether I'd ever had sex with a married woman?

ANGELA

That, I already know.

LUCKY

Not with a hundred percent certainty, you don't.

ANGELA

Don't argue. I know enough for my purposes.

LUCKY

Your purposes?

(Pause.)

ANGELA

So, what about tennis?

LUCKY

Thanks...but I better wait for Camille.

ANGELA

Aha. I do believe you're trying to make me jealous. Let her search for us.

CAMILLE approaches. She's in shorts and tee-shirt. Rubs LUCKY's back. Slips into an empty chair.

CAMILLE

Sorry. We'll go out in the afternoon, okay?

LUCKY

Okay.

(Pause.)

CAMILLE

So, what gives?

LUCKY

We were just debating whether my tennis is better than my tango.

CAMILLE

(looks at ANGELA)

From where I sat, your tango didn't seem too bad.
(Pours herself coffee.)

LUCKY

Well, my forte is table tennis. I should let you know...I have a killer topspin.

ANGELA

And let me say right away, I'm not fond of spinning balls, and I don't do ping-pong. If it's to be ping-pong, play with Camille. My advice, let her win, but not too often.

LUCKY

And you?

ANGELA

When we play tennis, Mr. Schwartz, let me win too, sometimes.

Silence.

LUCKY

How is Professor Lederer?

ANGELA

Like all professors, drowning in an ocean of commitments. God only knows, though, why my husband still needs to work like he needs tenure. Now, after this crazy award... You've added yourself to his problems. How did you find us?

CAMILLE

Yes, I'm interested in that too.

ANGELA

(to CAMILLE)

Camille! I hope you didn't put our destination onto your blog. Our house will get robbed.

CAMILLE

(to ANGELA)

I'm not that stupid.

LUCKY

Remember, Mrs. Lederer, our chat about receptionists? Well, I did show up on Professor Lederer's university doorstep. Unannounced, I confess. Anyway, his receptionist spilled the beans. So, after a last-minute deal, here I am.

ANGELA

Again, unannounced. Tell me, did you catch the Barbie filing her nails?

LUCKY

As a matter of fact--

CAMILLE

Hey, what's all this crap about receptionists and the filing of nails?

LUCKY

Oh, just our little joke. I was explaining probability and statistics earlier, and your mom didn't like my use of 'receptionist.' Politically incorrect.

CAMILLE

(to LUCKY)

Uh-uh. That's why we like you. You're the least politically correct person we know. Right, Mom?

ANGELA

Right.

CAMILLE

I told you Mom likes to pretend she's a professor. She always gets it wrong, though, but those stuffed shirts are too all over her to notice.

(Beat.)

Mind you, she does sound good.

ANGELA

That's not kind, Camille. We're giving Mr. Schwartz the wrong impression about us. We want him to like us.

(To LUCKY.)

Do you believe in 'like' at first sight?

CAMILLE

Don't you mean 'love'?

ANGELA

No, I mean 'like.'

LUCKY

Depends...on the mood, I guess. Yeah, I've gone into a classroom full of kids who already knew they hated me before I even opened my mouth. I guess, if a guy's in a bad mood, he'll hate the next person he meets. If he's in a good mood, he'll like the next person he meets.

CAMILLE

What if that next person is actually unlikable?

LUCKY

At least he'll try to like him.

CAMILLE

All I know is...long before I ever meet him, I'll detest my next math teacher--

ANGELA

Not so quick, dear. Mr. Schwartz started those Lucky Math Workshops.

CAMILLE

The what?

ANGELA

According to the Internet, he's the founder.

CAMILLE

(to LUCKY)

No shit! Why didn't you tell me?

ANGELA

Now, if you're nice to him--

CAMILLE

And mix with ghetto kids? You're the last person on earth who'd want me to mix with kids from the ghetto.

ANGELA

(to LUCKY)

Was Camille in a good mood when you met her?

CAMILLE

You'd barely finished trashing me.

ANGELA

But she likes you. The question is, are you truly likable?

CAMILLE

(touches LUCKY)

'Course he's likable, gung ho likable.

LUCKY

I'll have my brain scanned...

CAMILLE

Brain scans? Who brought that up?

LUCKY

Your dad.

(Pause.)

CAMILLE

I'm starving. Anyone want something?

LUCKY

Nothing for me, thanks.

CAMILLE rises, walks to the buffet.

ANGELA

You want to scan my husband's brain? Shouldn't you, the scientific experimenter, also undergo a scan of the brain?

LUCKY

Good idea.

ANGELA

To remove your own poison from, what would you call it, the equation?

LUCKY

I'd rather describe it as bias, not poison.

ANGELA

Are you biased against my husband?

LUCKY

Everyone's biased about something.

ANGELA

A shifty answer.

LUCKY

Why do you keep calling him 'my husband'?

ANGELA

Because it annoys you.

(Beat.)

Are you ready to, how do they say it in English...?

LUCKY

No, I'm not quite ready to cut and run.

CAMILLE returns with food, sits down.

ANGELA

Too many calories.

CAMILLE

(speaks while she eats)

Question. It's politically incorrect to describe the obvious. Like, if you say a dog is a dog, you freak out dog lovers, if not the dog.

LUCKY

Words can be hurtful...

CAMILLE

Words.

LUCKY

Yeah. Take a doctor, accused of hanky-panky. Suppose they show his face on TV. If you see his picture, you decide whether you like his look, his skin color, etcetera... On the radio, they'd be unlikely to hint as to his race--

ANGELA

They would if he were a killer, an escaped killer.

(Rises to her feet.)

I need to stretch. Tennis, anyone?

LUCKY

Thank you, no.

CAMILLE

Not today.

ANGELA

(to LUCKY)

I have a couples massage booked for eleven. Mr. Schwartz...?

LUCKY

Ask your husband. He needs it more than me.

ANGELA, displeased, exits.

CAMILLE

Ask your husband. Wow!

LUCKY

I better bow out. Leave you guys to sort things out...

CAMILLE

I love it. Words. Mightier than the sword. Mightier than pictures. Mightier, perhaps, than deeds?

LUCKY

Any thousand words of Shakespeare's are worth more than any still picture of any of his plays. They'd be worth more than most people's deeds, don't you think?

(Pause.)

CAMILLE

I'm so, like, embarrassed about Dad. Last night. What a freak.

LUCKY

I kind of...surprised the shit out of him.

CAMILLE

Me too. So, what are you up to? Something devious?

LUCKY

In a manner of speaking...

CAMILLE

I haven't seen him so freaked out since Bangalore.

LUCKY

When was that?

CAMILLE

Oh, couple of years ago.

(Beat.)

By the way, I don't buy that baloney about receptionists and nails. Straight, now. Dad asked to see you here, right?

LUCKY

Uh-uh. He was as surprised to see me as you were.

CAMILLE

Then it's all about that award, the one he got in China. I was there, you know. Awesome banquet.

LUCKY

Something like that.

CAMILLE

It's obvious. You're, like, considering him for some other high and mighty award. You're checking him out. And Mom's in on it. She knows.

(Beat.)

Don't think I haven't noticed... The two of you. Those funny looks. Whispering and all.

(Pause.)

LUCKY

No. That doesn't quite explain why, well, why your dad is taking it so badly.

CAMILLE

He asked to see you?

LUCKY

You mean, did he want to see me on his vacation? Seems not.

CAMILLE

It's a secret. You're secretly planning to study with him, like, on some hush-hush project.

LUCKY

Not with him directly.

CAMILLE

Did you make friends... Did you come onto me, just to get close to him?

LUCKY

I told you...I like you...

CAMILLE

I know. You're into, sort of, espionage spy-shit.

LUCKY

And your mother knows about it?

CAMILLE

Nah. She'd figure it out pretty quick.

(Beat.)

I had a nightmare last night.

LUCKY

About killer fish...?

CAMILLE

Don't laugh... You and Mom... That's why she started calling you 'Mr. Schwartz'? Last night you were 'Lucky.'

LUCKY

Professional distance...

CAMILLE

She calls everyone by their first names.

LUCKY

She's just being circumspect... Perhaps I scare her.

CAMILLE

Mom freaks, but she doesn't scare. Besides, you guys are hitting it off... Doesn't add up, though. Don't get me wrong, Lucky. Mom should be giving you the third degree.

LUCKY

About my background? No problem. I'd trade her questions, one for one, about hers.

CAMILLE

Don't try, buddy. We don't ever talk about her side of the family.

LUCKY

Oh... Why not...?

CAMILLE

Mmm... Well, my doc once asked me about my family history. Medical shit, you know. Apparently, he had an incomplete file. I asked Mom about it... She unraveled.

LUCKY

So... What did you find out?

(Pause.)

CAMILLE

(stands up)

Hey, remember that 'moody' crap? Well, suppose you're in a really mean mood...and the next person you met was a totally awesome girl...?

LUCKY

(head down, thoughtful)

I already met one...totally beautiful...awesome...

CAMILLE

...and it turned out she was adopted...?

(Beat.)

Are you all right?

Awkward silence.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Sorry, I screwed up... You're...adopted... Right?

LUCKY

(head still down)

Kind of.

CAMILLE

I don't mind, really I don't.

(Beat.)

Look at me, Lucky... Look up at me... Are you game for table tennis...?

LUCKY

Give me a minute...

Awkward silence.

CAMILLE rubs his shoulder.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

(snaps up, alert)

You're on.

CAMILLE

Great.

LUCKY

(jumps to his feet)

Let's go.

CAMILLE

You'll go easy with your topspin?

LUCKY

Yep.

CAMILLE

But if you make it too obvious, buddy, that you're trying to let me win, I won't talk to you for the rest of the day.

Dark.

SCENE 6: BEDROOM OF ANGELA AND BYRON -- EVENING

On the table: booze, glasses, bottle of pills, open laptop.

BYRON, disheveled, sits at the table,
looks at the screen.

ANGELA peers over his shoulder.

BYRON

Outside the United States, nothing can stop the CIA from monitoring calls and e-mails. That's why our Schwartz waited, to ambush us here. With national security at stake, for sure he's not working alone.

ANGELA

Okay, okay. Stop this national security nonsense. Stop. You e-mailed your Indian. Asked to meet with him. He told you to get lost. You e-mailed him again. This time, he told you that any errors in the final paper were all yours.

BYRON

He confirmed nothing, neither errors nor gaps in his theory. That proves it. Right. He and Schwartz are in collusion. It's a set-up, to milk us... We're back at square one.

ANGELA

Except that your Indian now also knows you're in a panic.

BYRON

I'm finished!

ANGELA

And Schwartz. All you have is that he started this Lucky Math Workshop for ghetto kids, he graduated two years ago from MIT in mathematics, he has a brother called Tobias, and the family Schwartz runs a plumbing shop in Patterson.

BYRON

Yeah, I drew a blank on the years since he graduated. For all I know he lived in Bangalore.

ANGELA

The Schwartz's of Patterson: they're his foster parents. He joined them the year Camille was born. About his brother, I'm not sure.

BYRON

The Berlin Wall. Something about six months after its fall... The year Camille was born.

ANGELA

Foster parents. That means he was never fully adopted. Get on the phone. Reactivate Morrison's retainer. He can dig into Mr. Schwartz's history--

BYRON

No way.

ANGELA

That maid in Berlin, the one who jumped out of your hotel room, the one you'd been screwing--

BYRON

Damn it, Angela! She was blackmailing us.

ANGELA

Us. Yeah. That's what you said.

BYRON

No private eyes. None. They'll find out about you too.

ANGELA

(icy)

You got nowhere understanding your own paper, you got nowhere offering money to your Bangalore Indian, you can't be sure about his silence, or his collusions. And...we know zip about Schwartz's agenda...

(Pacing.)

How to hook him...? There's several ways. For one thing, he has a weakness for the underprivileged... Jews...

BYRON

The Matisse?

ANGELA

That ill-gotten Matisse. Why not?

BYRON

You think he's on its trail?

ANGELA

Well, we have no option but to get our Mr. Schwartz working for us, one hundred percent.

BYRON

In the old days...a good fire--

ANGELA

Jesus Christ! And what would you propose to burn down, Byron? Your university or this hotel?

A knock on the door. ANGELA grabs the bottle of pills.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Into the bathroom! Take your pills. You look like shit.

BYRON shuts the laptop, scoots into the bathroom, shuts the door.

CAMILLE bursts in. She's wearing a trampy dress, make-up, lipstick.

CAMILLE

What did you say to him?!

ANGELA

Right now, I'd say you look like a slut.

CAMILLE

One moment we're having a fabulous time. Then he gets a message on his cell... He goes all quiet, like... Then he says we shouldn't go out. It's not 'appropriate.' 'Appropriate'! For God's sake!

ANGELA

Good. Then you can have a quiet dinner with me.

CAMILLE

I want to know exactly what's going on.

ANGELA

There's been a hitch.

CAMILLE

Did you call him? Yes or no!

ANGELA

Shut up. Your father is quite embarrassed that your Mr. Lucky Schwartz came across a few little errors in his paper. Probably merely printing errors, but your father has been caught unawares.

CAMILLE

You shitting me? You're bending over backwards because Dad made some stupid errors only nerds care about?

ANGELA

What did Mr. Schwartz tell you?

CAMILLE sits on the bed.

CAMILLE

Dad is up for an award, or whatever, and he's here to help, or something like that. It's supposed to be a big surprise.

ANGELA

Whatever, and something like that. Big surprise. Those were his exact words?

CAMILLE

Shit. How do I know? I kind of guessed, and he never denied it. Something about espionage.

ANGELA

Don't make things up.

CAMILLE

Dad's messed. Any idiot can see it.

ANGELA

What exactly did he say to you? It may be crucial.

CAMILLE

(leaps to her feet)

Crucial, shit!

ANGELA

Stop shouting!

CAMILLE

Well, I suppose I asked him if he was here about that award Dad got in China. He said yes.

ANGELA

He said yes? Exactly yes?

CAMILLE

Hell, I don't know exactly. We've talked about tons of shit. I must have gone on about Dad being considered for something else high and mighty. Don't think I haven't noticed the two of you... Those looks, that whispering.

ANGELA

He denied that, of course.

CAMILLE

He thought it odd that Dad was taking it so badly. So do I.

(Beat.)

So, Mommy, what have you and Lucky been whispering about?

ANGELA

His crazy sense of humor.

CAMILLE

Why the hell should he share his humor with you and not with me?

ANGELA

Ask him.

CAMILLE

Right. He'll tell me what's going on.

ANGELA

Stay away from him.

CAMILLE

Ask him. Stay away from him. What a right merry-go-round.

ANGELA

He's a gold-digger.

CAMILLE

Oh, really? You didn't seem to mind him earlier today. Besides, he's nice to me.

ANGELA

Right, like that middle-aged pervert who tricked you into e-mailing him your nude photo.

CAMILLE

Even you get along with him, Mommy dear.

ANGELA

There's a reason.

CAMILLE

Oh, yeah? Because of some project? Some award? Some investment?

(Beat.)

Come play tennis with me, Mr. Schwartz. Have a couples massage with me, Mr. Schwartz. God, don't you dare spoil this for me... Stay out of my life!

ANGELA

It's obvious.

CAMILLE

Stop it! It's because of you he doesn't want to see me.

ANGELA

A stranger smooth-talks you, then frightens you by a little clever distance. What do you do? You turn into a slut.

BYRON emerges, rubbing his eyes.

BYRON

Couples massages! Sluts! What the hell is all this about?

ANGELA

Once again, your daughter is being difficult.

CAMILLE

Me? What about last night? One of you passed out, the other clung to him like a wet blanket--

BYRON

Enough! I'm sending her home.

CAMILLE

I won't go!

BYRON

Pack your bags, Camille. On the first plane, you're out!

CAMILLE

You can't make me.

BYRON

Jesus Christ.

ANGELA

Camille, do everyone a favor. For two days, you've glued yourself to this adventurer. You want him to pine for you? Okay. Stay out of his way for as long as I tell you to. Until his business with your father is settled.

CAMILLE

No!

ANGELA

To your room, Camille!

CAMILLE

(stands by the door)

Turn him off totally. Go ahead. Embarrass me to death.

(Almost exits, returns.)

Oh, he's clued-in big-time into your precious histories... besides, I told him one of us is adopted. So, there!

CAMILLE exits, slams the door.

BYRON sits on the bed, bows his head, wipes tears from his eyes.

BYRON

I'll kill him.

Silence.

ANGELA

(sarcastic)

Yes. A great idea. Why didn't I think of it first? Shall I get you a gun, baby, or can you manage that by yourself? Perhaps we can convince one of the drug-pushers...?

BYRON

I'll drive him to that windward precipice...

ANGELA

Of course. You'll shoot him in the leg first, right? And, just in case he doesn't get it, you'll shoot him in the other one. This way, before he dies, he'll spit out the dirt he has on us. Perhaps he'll rewrite your paper for you while you point your gun at him. The gun. The gun. How do you propose to explain away the gun, *Liebchen*?

BYRON

(perks up)

The sea's plenty deep enough.

ANGELA

Oh Jesus. To think I might once have actually been in love with you.

(Beat.)

I can do a hundred things without guns, and enough days to make them work. You... Line up your ducks. Open accounts, suck him in. Make donations to his workshops, to synagogues, whatever. Arrange it. Get him a scholarship, a loan, no collateral required.

(Beat.)

There is, of course, his soft spot for Camille...

BYRON

(bangs his fist on the table)

While you get your jollies, and he has the time of his life, my time, my fucking time is running out...

ANGELA

So it seems.

BYRON

Bitch!

ANGELA

(looks into the mirror)

You said it, *Liebchen*.

BYRON

We have to find out what he knows. Who he's in with.

ANGELA

We? We, baby? Is there still a 'we'?

BYRON

Oh, for Christ's sake, Angela.

Silence.

ANGELA

(staring into the mirror)

I'll find out what he knows, *Liebchen*. And who's behind him. Oh yeah, I'll find out.

ANGELA goes to the hotel phone, picks up the receiver, dials. Turns, looks at BYRON before she speaks.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Lucky...? Yes, it's Angela.

Curtain.

END OF ACT I

ACT II SCENE 1: CAMILLE'S BEDROOM -- SAME EVENING

A bedroom similar to that of ANGELA and BYRON. Untidy, bed unmade.

CAMILLE, still wearing her provocative clothes, her purse nearby, sits on the edge of her bed. She smokes a joint.

ANGELA enters in her island dress, jewelry, lipstick. Has her handbag.

Downstage, to one side, stepping in and out of view, LUCKY, barefoot, in shorts and tee-shirt, talks on his cell phone to Tobias.

ANGELA

Change that dress!

CAMILLE

You tried something... You turned him off.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

Damn it, Tobias, we said we'd play it straight. We agreed you'd stay put...

ANGELA puts her handbag on the dresser.

ANGELA

Perhaps it's you.

CAMILLE

We had a great time, Lucky and I, until you decided you liked him too.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

...like I said, I hadn't reckoned... Yeah, should've waited... Got the scoop on her too...

ANGELA

Have you slept with him?

CAMILLE

Ha! I wondered when you'd ask.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

Yeah... Must've had Camille in her teens...

CAMILLE

You're jealous! Anyway, if I haven't, I will!

ANGELA
Your father's right.

CAMILLE
Huh?

ANGELA
You're going home.

CAMILLE
So you can have Lucky to yourself? No way.

ANGELA
I'm going with you. First thing tomorrow. Your dad has to sort things out by himself.

LUCKY
(into the phone)
I feel shitty... We're in too deep...

CAMILLE jumps to her feet, puts out her joint in the ashtray.

CAMILLE
I'm staying!

LUCKY
(into the phone)
I need time out... Give me... Give these folks a break...
(Beat.)
Oh, Jesus! No way. You're not coming down here, man...

ANGELA
I wish you wouldn't smoke those.

CAMILLE
You're on Dad's side only on the chance he makes up with Granddad. If it's a lost cause, you'll dump him.

LUCKY
(into the phone)
Uh-uh... You really believe Hillary still stomachs Bill? How...? The power, the glitz, that's what she gets off on...

CAMILLE
Better face it, Mom, you need me. I'm staying.
(Pause.)

ANGELA
You're not adopted, you know.

CAMILLE
What?

ANGELA
Don't speak of it any more.

CAMILLE

What did you say?

ANGELA

I said you're not adopted.

CAMILLE circles ANGELA, looks at her.

CAMILLE

So, if I'm not, then you were.

ANGELA

Not quite.

CAMILLE

Huh?

(Pause.)

ANGELA

Things happened.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

...like...suicide.

(Beat.)

Maybe, maybe... There's no point, so stop beating up on yourself...

CAMILLE

What things? Where? When?

LUCKY

(into the phone)

...but we...won't ever know if she was pregnant...

Silence.

ANGELA

I swore never to see them again.

(Pause.)

CAMILLE

(with real concern)

Your mom and dad?

(Pause.)

ANGELA

Never again.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

Camille's mom was already knocked up... about the time of the Berlin Wall...

CAMILLE

Where do they live?

(Pause.)

Where?

ANGELA

Nowhere.

CAMILLE

Nowhere. Crap. What's the great secret? Where d'you come from. For God's sake, tell me.

ANGELA

Absolutely not.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

No, Camille knows from nothing...

ANGELA

No, and you'll not speak of our 'history' to anyone.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

The Stasi? Angela an informant...? A spy...? You're getting real sidetracked here...

CAMILLE

What history? Not the Lederer's. Anything worth printing is already plastered all over the Internet... The war, the weapons, the feuds. It's you I know nothing about. Does anyone? Does Granddad Lederer?

(Beat.)

So, Lucky's uncovered something.

ANGELA

Impossible.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

No way. Not from East Germany... Nor Czechoslovakia...

CAMILLE

I thought so. He does have dirt on you. I'll ask him, you know.

(Beat.)

Granddad would have had you checked out.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

Wouldn't surprise me... They had to have...checked into her, I mean...

CAMILLE

Didn't he, before you married Dad? Check you out? You had to have been more than an au pair before you got married.

ANGELA

Don't go there, Camille.

CAMILLE

You worked in Granddad's house. Got pregnant. Dad married you.

(Beat.)

So, who's my father?

LUCKY

(into the phone)

...they wiped her slate clean...

ANGELA

Enough.

CAMILLE

(makes eye-contact with ANGELA)

You're afraid it'll come out. All of it.

(Beat.)

Perhaps it's only that one of your brothers or sisters has been looking for you, and Lucky got wind of it. That's not so bad, is it?

ANGELA

They're dead.

CAMILLE

(with concern)

Who?

ANGELA

They don't exist.

CAMILLE

(breaks down)

Who doesn't exist?! Oh, I just can't stand this shit!

(Bursts into tears. Beat.)

I know. What you mean is, they do exist, but you refuse to tell me. I have all these aunts and uncles, and you won't tell me a thing about them.

(Sobbing.)

This is so fucked-up...horrid...

LUCKY

(into the phone, tired)

...that is, only if they couldn't wipe it clean... I should've done my fucking homework...

ANGELA

Oh, stop!

CAMILLE
(reaches for her purse)
I want to die.

ANGELA
You'd better not overdose again.

Trembling, CAMILLE pulls out a joint,
lights up, takes a drag.

LUCKY
(into the phone, close to
tears)
I'm kinda wrung out... Bullshit and more bullshit. Out...
No more, man...

ANGELA snatches the joint from CAMILLE,
goes to the bathroom, flushes the joint
down the toilet, returns.

CAMILLE
(sobbing)
Just for a moment, back then, just for once, I thought we
might actually be connecting. My mistake. You're mean and
hateful. I hate you.

CAMILLE tries to shove ANGELA to the
door. ANGELA resists.

CAMILLE
Get out of my room. Out. I want you out!

LUCKY
(into the phone)
Our plan, damn it... He was supposed to do the dirty work
for us... A slam dunk... Should've been...

CAMILLE
If you don't leave right now, I swear I'll...I'll...

LUCKY
(into the phone)
Right now, they're all out of joint... Everyone... Me
too... Okay-okay... My fault...

ANGELA picks up her handbag.

ANGELA
Fix yourself up. Come to dinner in half an hour... I'm
going to have a little chat with our Mr. Schwartz.

CAMILLE
I'm coming too.

ANGELA

Not looking like a floozie, you won't.

CAMILLE

I want to hear what you say to him.

ANGELA

(moves towards the door)

It's private.

CAMILLE

Like what? Like Dad has to give back his award because of some errors in his silly paper? Is that it?

LUCKY

(into the phone, in disbelief)

Nope, no recorders. No CIA shit...

ANGELA

(touches the doorhandle)

We'll see you at dinner.

CAMILLE

You're buying him off, right...? Like that what's-her-name Lolita... That pussy who wanted Dad to write her thesis...?

LUCKY

(into the phone, alert)

For chrissake, Tobias, we're not into anonymous either. No web-sites. No calls...

ANGELA

See you at dinner.

CAMILLE

Cow.

ANGELA

What did you say?

CAMILLE

You heard.

ANGELA slaps CAMILLE.

ANGELA

You will not address me like that. My business with Mr. Schwartz has to do with your father.

CAMILLE throws herself on her bed.

CAMILLE

Dad's not my real father. That's it. That's what this fuss is all about.

ANGELA

My God! Are you loaded up on pills again?

CAMILLE

(sits up)

Ransack my room. Go on.

ANGELA

(resigned)

What's the point?

CAMILLE

Turn things upside down, like last time. Go on! Empty my purse too.

ANGELA

You're too clever.

CAMILLE

I know why Dad's unplugged. I'm not his daughter, and he's afraid Granddad will find out.

LUCKY

(into the phone, business-like)

That government deal...? On the level... Totally, absolutely... That's the way it stays...

CAMILLE

I'm sure it was accidental, though. Lucky finding out. Must have been. A couple of times, he did mention something about the year I was born. I never imagined--

ANGELA

Shut up! Our little situation started off having nothing to do with you and me. It had everything to do with your father's scientific paper -- this silly paper, as you put it. If the Pentagon's interested, if Schwartz can be trusted, money and prestige are at stake. It's natural for the key players to jockey for the best line-up at the starting gate. Lucky's clever. He wants to keep your father off-balance by talk of errors, etcetera. Your dad was caught by surprise. And he's a bad negotiator...

LUCKY

(into the phone)

Yeah, by his balls... His reputation's on the brink... He knows it... Angela knows it... Time to back off.

(Beat.)

Don't shout! Shouting won't bring Mom back... I remember her too...

ANGELA walks towards the door.

ANGELA

You'll have dinner with Lucky and me, as if nothing's wrong.

LUCKY
(into the phone, tearful)
...as agreed, man... Last resort...

CAMILLE
Nothing's wrong? Nothing's wrong?

ANGELA
The boy grew up poor. So? So, he craves a bank account.

LUCKY
(into the phone)
Shut up, Tobias. Angela hasn't figured us out... Besides,
we're not after his fucking money.

CAMILLE
I don't care.

ANGELA
The Schwartz's of Patterson... Plumber and wife.

LUCKY
(into the phone)
Give them...you know, my love... Call them...

CAMILLE
Not Patterson! Austria. His mom was a housemaid, from a
long line of housemaids. He didn't mention any plumbers.

ANGELA
Oh?

LUCKY
(into the phone)
Stuff your Stasi and GDR crap. Angela covers her accent real
well, but her Viennese... Yeah... Breaks right through...

CAMILLE
I thought he was joking.

ANGELA
And you replied...?

CAMILLE
Something about housemaid stock not cutting it with you.

ANGELA
It's all about lust, Camille. As with every mother's son,
it's all about lust.

LUCKY
(into the phone)
...Mordecai...? The guy I worked with... You know,
Cleveland. Bad news?

CAMILLE

It's wrong, Mom. Wrong to string him along.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

Good news? You cut out just then... Yeah...the rabbi. A fund-raiser...? Good kids...

ANGELA

At the same time, we'll see if he stays as smitten with you as you with him.

CAMILLE

No! He'll end up hating me.

ANGELA

Better to bear hate than to be looked down upon.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

You asshole! Lay off, unless you're hankering to landscape a prison for the rest of your life.

CAMILLE

You're frightening me.

ANGELA

Never fear success, Camille. One such person in our family is tiresome enough.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

The guy won't suffer in silence... Yeah... I fucked up...

ANGELA

Be smart. Echo a boy's nonsense back to him, line by line... Play him like Isaac Stern.

(Pause)

CAMILLE

We already made out.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

Uh-huh... Yeah, we made out... So...?

ANGELA

(returns to the door)

Fix your face. Meet us in half an hour.

CAMILLE

(raising her voice)

I said, I already slept with him. Lucky.

ANGELA opens the door.

ANGELA

Your father's busy on preliminaries right now, dear. After dinner, I'll drag him out of the shadows.

CAMILLE

Don't you dare drag Lucky onto the dance floor.

ANGELA

(turns to CAMILLE)

The four of us will have a little chat. By daybreak, we'll have everything cleared up... Be strong. When all parties look equally unhappy, we'll be close to a solution.

(Pause.)

CAMILLE

Daybreak?

ANGELA

We're victims of time, and time zones. How do you say it...? Yes. Before we let the match begin, we must level the field of play. Then we win.

CAMILLE

I'll warn him.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

Give it a rest!

ANGELA

(coldly)

It won't matter.

CAMILLE

Don't be so damned sure!

ANGELA

You can't stop it, Camille. No one can.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

Okay-okay, I'll e-mail his college... Yeah, up front... But only if they sweep his shit under the rug...

ANGELA exits, closes the door.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Cool it! I just promised you I'd hang in. Just one... One more day...

Dark.

SCENE 2: LUCKY'S BEDROOM -- MINUTES LATER

The bed is untidy, clothes and shoes on the floor, but no computer, nor any textbooks or papers.

LUCKY sits on the bed, propped against the headboard. Barefoot, shorts and tee-shirt, cell phone at his ear.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

He was carried to his room. Haven't seen him since.

The bedroom door opens.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

Wait a sec.

ANGELA lets herself in, puts the key in her handbag. Looks at LUCKY, walks to the table, sets down the bag.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

(into the phone, looks at ANGELA)

Likely...drunk... They're onto us... Uh-huh, you'd think...right, I played it straight... Totally.

ANGELA peeks into the mirror, opens and closes a dresser drawer.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Yeah... Something... Doesn't feel right.

Shaking her head, ANGELA sits down on the bed beside him, runs her fingers along his leg.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Oh, hold on, hold on, she just walked in... Really... This very moment... Can't tell. Here, say hello to her.

LUCKY hands ANGELA the phone.

She takes it with her free hand, keeps the other on his knee.

ANGELA

(into the phone)

Tobias? Yes...Angela... You too.

(Listens.)

Why didn't you come here with Lucky? Fabulous weather.

(Pause.)

Yeah... You play too? He plays a mean game.

(Looks at LUCKY. Listens.)

East Germany? Good heavens, no... The devil!

(Listens.)

Ah, next time... Yes... If there is one... To you too.

Servus. You understand Austrian...? Good. Bye-bye.

LUCKY takes the phone.

LUCKY

(into the phone)

Yep, the water's sure muddy... Switching off... Okay?

(Shuts phone, lays it down.)

Give me your bag.

ANGELA hesitates, then reaches for her bag, hands it to him.

He pokes about inside it, takes things out, one by one, puts a small bottle to his nose, then replaces the items.

ANGELA

Satisfied? No guns, no knives, no vials... Or were you just checking the brand of my perfume?

(Looking around.)

And you? No hidden cameras to connect us to the Internet?

LUCKY taps his head.

LUCKY

I've everything I need, right here.

ANGELA

What about...

(touches her breast)

...here?

LUCKY

How did you get stuck with him? Let me guess. Money.

ANGELA

Now, now. No insults.

(Beat.)

On the dance floor, you were all over me. Well...I'm in your room, baby...

ANGELA plays with his knee.

LUCKY

Jesus, I never imagined...

ANGELA

(stands up)

Then why keep up the provoking, darling. You know nothing about me. Nothing.

(Beat.)

East Germany... Huh!

LUCKY

Clue me in. I'm not exactly CIA.

ANGELA

Funny... Byron has become paranoid about the CIA. Should he be?

LUCKY

You mean, cameras, recorders...?

ANGELA

Phone calls, e-mails...

LUCKY

Huh. So that's what... Well, far as I know, my room's bug-free, except for some scouting ants and one cockroach.

ANGELA

You...were searching for...?

LUCKY

Maybe...

ANGELA

Only... 'maybe'?

LUCKY

Thought you'd be desperate. You gave me twenty-four hours to sweat. Still, you surprised me.

ANGELA raises her hands above her head.

ANGELA

So...finish your search.

LUCKY swings off the bed. Runs his hands up and down her body, slides his arms around her. Tries to kiss her, but she turns away.

ANGELA

Careful... Don't mess me up.

LUCKY kisses her neck, pulls up her dress.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

You told my husband you'd mix the professional with the personal... Now I know what you meant.

LUCKY

(pulls away, angry)

Shit!

ANGELA

You succeeded...*n'est-ce pas?*

LUCKY

Shit!

ANGELA

Take heed, poor boy, take heed. This Angela is wrong for you. She makes love only to men who hate her.

(Comes close, rubs his
shoulder.)

I have a request.

LUCKY

(draws away again)

There's nothing... Really--

ANGELA

A professional request.

LUCKY

My business isn't--

ANGELA

Business? What business?

LUCKY

...with you.

ANGELA opens all the dresser drawers.
Pokes through, fishes out some sheets
of paper. Flips through the sheets.

ANGELA

(reading from a sheet)

"I regret that I must bring to your attention an unfortunate situation that involves one of your eminent professors. I have good reasons to believe that Dr. Byron Lederer may have misused the work of others in a recent publication that appeared under his name. Because of the exposure the paper in question has already received, and because of certain wider ramifications of the results, I would like to meet with you or your delegate at your earliest convenience..."

(Looks up.)

Have you sent it?

LUCKY remains silent.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

This? Is this unpleasantness really what you want to be remembered for? Someone with your talent...with your future?

LUCKY

Why not sift through my garbage too?

ANGELA

(waves the sheets)

You wanted me to find this.

LUCKY

Just in case you dropped by while I was out.

ANGELA

Where are they?

LUCKY

What?

ANGELA

Come now... Your books, papers... Your computer.

LUCKY reaches into his pocket, brings out a set of car keys.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Huh!

LUCKY

(looks at his watch)

Sammy's Island Rentals is already shut for the night.

ANGELA

I can wake him.

LUCKY

Go ahead...

ANGELA

We've things to sort out... By God, if it takes all night.

LUCKY

A promise?

ANGELA

Better break promises than never make them. Right?

(Beat.)

Your brother. One of the players...?

LUCKY

Yes...

ANGELA

He's angry.

LUCKY

Camille says you don't scare.

ANGELA

Ah, Camille, innocent Camille. You love her, no?

(Beat.)

Long ago, I learnt never to show fear. Not to anyone, particularly not to a man.

LUCKY

I didn't intend...fear.

ANGELA

What then...? To impress Camille?

LUCKY

It isn't you... Either of you...

ANGELA

Your words... That...phone call with Tobias. It sent a cold wind through me.

LUCKY

What did I say?

ANGELA

Enough, more than enough.

LUCKY

I didn't...don't want to hurt you. Or Camille.

ANGELA

You hate my husband. You hope he won't rise to your challenge. Why?

LUCKY

What do you know?

ANGELA

About...?

LUCKY

His...crisis.

ANGELA

(reads from another sheet)

"Professor..." "Family: filthy rich..." "World War II..."
"Billions..." "Skeletons in German closet." "Murderer"
underlined. "Angela" in capital letters. Three underlines.
Question mark, question mark, question mark.

(Looks up.)

Do you know what Camille's grandfather is worth?

LUCKY

I won't scare either, Angela. You want to think your way out of this? Okay... Give it a shot.

ANGELA

(tries to compose herself)

Very well. Byron's paper. Are you behind it?

LUCKY

Behind?

ANGELA

Did you write it?

(Pause.)

LUCKY

Clever, a very clever speculation. The Bangalore affair.

ANGELA

Answer me, damn you! Is it your work?

LUCKY

It would explain a lot, wouldn't it? In fact,... No, I'm not behind it.

ANGELA

Pity. Is the Pentagon really involved?

LUCKY

In truth, I studied the paper. While on contract. Brought it to the D.o.D.'s attention.

ANGELA

Why's it important?

LUCKY

The paper suggests how to squeeze more horse-power out of any given CPU. Much more. And cheap. A boon for hackers and terrorists. Hence the CIA.

(Pause.)

ANGELA

Bangalore...?

LUCKY

Camille confirmed it. You were all there at just about the right time. A mathematical theory is a composition. Like Mozart, the style, talent, and notation are hard to disguise.

ANGELA

Beethoven could pretend to be Mozart. Why not?

LUCKY

Only if Beethoven was familiar with Mozart's work, which he was. Given his age, if Dr. Lederer had any talent, he'd already have one-of-a-kind compositions to his credit.

ANGELA

(sarcastic)

Well, at least this time we're not slandering a nail-filing receptionist.

LUCKY

To compose in Mozart's style, however, he'd need reasons. Plausible reasons.

ANGELA goes to the mirror, preens.

ANGELA

I believe you wrote the paper. Furthermore, I believe you wrote it in the style of that Indian mathematician, and funneled it to Byron.

LUCKY

That's flattering.

(Beat.)

What gave Dr. Lederer away was his lack of collaborators. He should have invented coauthors to hang his novel style on.

ANGELA

When you targeted Byron, had you targeted sex with his daughter? Or his wife?

LUCKY

Your husband killed my mom.

ANGELA

Jesus Christ!

Awkward Silence.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Camille is out there, her heart ripped apart, and her father is drinking himself silly.

(Pause.)

LUCKY

That's it, huh? Not even a 'where' or a 'when'?

ANGELA

Oh, Jesus, what a mess. How I wish you'd come to me first...

(Beat.)

Tobias's voice said it all. He asked if we'd-- How old is he?

LUCKY

Thirty.

ANGELA

Slow?

LUCKY

His speech. His brain's sharp and he remembers his mother.
So do I.

ANGELA

Dear God, what a mess, what a mess, what a mess.

LUCKY

(gestures at the room)

I was just about to tidy up.

ANGELA

Stop this! I've had it with foolishness.

LUCKY

My mother died, Angela.

(Pause.)

Don't you want to know her name?

Silence.

ANGELA

Your price.

LUCKY

Why are you doing this?

ANGELA

Your price. Name it. A broker is paid by one side or
another. From whom did you expect to get paid?

LUCKY

Is Camille adopted?

ANGELA

She's my daughter. And Byron's.

LUCKY

I don't believe you.

ANGELA

Probability: one hundred percent.

LUCKY

So I'm a shit. Probability: one hundred percent.

ANGELA

So...no more business calculations. Now it's personal.

(Throws up her arms.)

Pouf.

(Pause.)

Pouf. Hello, there.

LUCKY

This is nuts.

ANGELA

I could have told Tobias I was sadly out of luck tonight, that you couldn't get it up.

LUCKY

For some weird...reason...you want me to hate you.

ANGELA

I'll swear you forced an indecent proposal on me.

LUCKY

I didn't.

ANGELA

To save Byron...

LUCKY

I'm not doing this...

ANGELA

I can be very convincing. Very.
(Pause.)

LUCKY

What about the key?

ANGELA

You thumbed your nose at Byron's prize-winning effort as if it's a lie, as if it's wrong. Only you can fix it, you said. You promised you'd correct his work if I gave in to you. As per our arrangement, the front desk gave me the key.

LUCKY

Fix the shit? He doesn't even understand it.

ANGELA

Make him look good...

LUCKY

You have to be kidding.

ANGELA

It's the easiest thing in the world for a bright kid with money to find a coach. Right? Well, Byron is your needy under-performer, and I'm offering you the greatest challenge of your life. Like your rabbi.

LUCKY

What about my mother? You don't even dare ask me her name.

ANGELA's finger darts to her eye, wipes away a tear.

ANGELA

Do it for Camille.

LUCKY

How about some straight talk?

ANGELA

Wait... Do you have any other brothers, or sisters perhaps?

LUCKY

A brother... But he's dead.

ANGELA

Oh...my dear God.

LUCKY

Oh my dear God what?!

A knock. Flustered, ANGELA clears the sheets of paper into a drawer, looks into the mirror. With the back of her hand, dabs at tears in her eyes.

ANGELA

Let her in. I told her I was fetching you for dinner.

LUCKY looks at her in surprise.
Another knock. He goes to the door.

LUCKY

Camille?

CAMILLE (O.S.)

Hi there.

LUCKY

(opens the door)

Ready for dinner?

CAMILLE enters. She has changed into less revealing clothes.

CAMILLE

Am I interrupting?

ANGELA, at the mirror, hides her face.

ANGELA

Course not, dear. Just having a little chat.

LUCKY

Love your outfit.

ANGELA

(turns briefly, doesn't look)

Good choice, dear.

LUCKY kicks some shoes under the bed.

LUCKY

Sorry about the mess.

ANGELA

You should see Camille's room.

LUCKY

Is this an invitation?

ANGELA

(still at the mirror)

Don't you dare.

(Beat.)

As a matter of fact, you'd catch both of us there tonight.
Her father and I are kind of, well--

CAMILLE

Do you have to tell everyone? God, this is so embarrassing.

CAMILLE turns her back.

LUCKY raises his hands, shakes his head
at ANGELA.

ANGELA

Go ahead, both of you, get us a good table. I need the
bathroom.

LUCKY

We'll wait.

ANGELA

Go, go.

LUCKY

It's okay, we'll wait for you.

ANGELA darts into the bathroom, shuts
the door.

CAMILLE stares after her, surprised
she'd use LUCKY'S bathroom.

CAMILLE

Is she, like...leaning on you?

CAMILLE puts her arms around his neck.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Let's shake her off. Come.

LUCKY

(pulls away)

Camille!

CAMILLE

(hurt)
Why did you do that?

LUCKY

Sorry.

CAMILLE

What happened? Am I doing something wrong?

LUCKY

Course not.

CAMILLE

You're scaring me.

LUCKY

Oh, shit.

CAMILLE

Let's slip away, like yesterday. Quick, before she comes out.

LUCKY

She'll be unhappy.

CAMILLE

I thought you had guts!

LUCKY

Give her a couple of minutes.

CAMILLE

I've been clingy, I know, and you're kind-of pissed off...

LUCKY

Are they really splitting up?

CAMILLE

(tries to compose herself)
They've done it before, Lucky, tons of times. Dad always crawls back. She hacks off another pound of his flesh.

(Looks towards the bathroom.)

I don't care about errors, hush-hush science, or brain scans. I've things to ask you about. Other things. My things.

CAMILLE takes him by the hand.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

I want to make out again.

(Pause.)

LUCKY

What is she up to?

CAMILLE
You really don't have to get so chummy with her.
(Pulls his hand.)
Let's go.

LUCKY
It's...it's more polite to wait.

CAMILLE
(whispering)
I've seen her like this before. I know her.

ANGELA (O.S.)
You two still out there? Go, get a table.

LUCKY
We'll wait.

ANGELA (O.S.)
No need.

CAMILLE
(to LUCKY)
Why?

LUCKY
Shush.

CAMILLE
(frantic)
You're frightening me. Everyone's frightening me. Oh God,
please don't make me beg.

LUCKY
Shush, now. After dinner, we'll vamoose. I promise.

CAMILLE
Come. Now!

LUCKY
It's okay.

CAMILLE
We'll spend the night together.

LUCKY
(distant, listening for ANGELA)
No, no.

CAMILLE
What?!

LUCKY
We'll see.

CAMILLE

Damn you! What's wrong with you?!

CAMILLE yanks herself away, rushes to the door.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

I can't take this shit any more!

LUCKY

(reaches out)

Wait.

CAMILLE exits.

LUCKY stares at the bathroom door until it opens and ANGELA walks out. They stare at each other in silence. LUCKY grabs her.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

This is sick, disgusting.

ANGELA

(lets herself be held)

The bathroom? How could a little freshen-up in your bathroom be disgusting?

LUCKY

Camille ran away.

ANGELA

I begged you to go with her.

LUCKY

You knew she'd run off.

ANGELA

(stressed)

For a boy who likes a girl, you play a lousy hand.

LUCKY

Zero sum. Right. Zero sum, with a ballooning number of losers...

He grabs ANGELA by the neck.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

You had me worried sick!

She chokes. He lets her go.

ANGELA

(touching her neck)

Why? Why did you stop?

She sinks onto the bed. He looks in disbelief at his hands.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

So find her. Go, go. I'm not stopping you. Find her.

Dark.

SCENE 3: BEDROOM OF ANGELA AND BYRON -- LATE NIGHT

ANGELA'S handbag rests on the dresser. On the table: booze, wine, and BYRON'S laptop, open.

ANGELA is still in her island dress and jewelry, LUCKY in shorts and tee-shirt.

Both are exhausted. ANGELA is drinking.

ANGELA
(downing her glass)
More wine...

LUCKY
I still don't like this. Not a bit...

ANGELA pours the wine herself, drinks.

ANGELA
Camille's tough. Anyway, anyway... What with your pull and Byron's wallet... You saw... The whole island's on the case. Every druggie, every cabby, every policeman...

LUCKY
(looking at his watch)
The Four Anchors isn't that far away.

LUCKY'S cell phone rings. He reaches into his pocket, answers it.

LUCKY
Thanks, Delroy... They're with you...? Both...? Great.
(Shuts the phone.)
Only traffic.

ANGELA
Your drug-pusher?

LUCKY
Delroy, my taxi driver. He just turned onto the property.
Thank God.

ANGELA
You see?

LUCKY
Anything could have happened...

ANGELA
(takes a sip)
Relax... It's not the first time. Won't be the last.

LUCKY
What is it about you, damn it?

ANGELA

There's that fire again...

(Sighs.)

Ah...

LUCKY

I lost it. Sorry.

ANGELA

Another time, another occasion, my dear...it might have turned me on...

LUCKY

I forgot my--

ANGELA

Yes...you did! Decency.

LUCKY

I was afraid--

ANGELA

(slurring)

You still planning...report about this craziness, about the personal aspect...? Mark down...a footnote...hate, the strongest aphrodisiac.

LUCKY

Is this how you check out Camille's boyfriends?

ANGELA

It's not usually so...necessary.

ANGELA sits down at the table. LUCKY follows suit, pours wine, drinks.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

This time... Because you came here for just one reason: to destroy us...

LUCKY

Leave him.

ANGELA

Tonight?

LUCKY

You said you would.

ANGELA

Beware... The boomerang... His problems are my problems... If we keep up...cat and mouse zero-sum...my regrettable problems will be your regrettable problems. Assuredly.

LUCKY

My proposal to him... Bona fide. Still is.

ANGELA

(drinks)

The perfect plan... The perfect crime. Congratulations.

(Beat.)

So...who's behind it? Sore losers...? Big...business?
What if that Indian...? What if he came up with nothing...?
Take responsibility. I still...think... Yes...you make
quite...impression. Dear me. What am I thinking...?

LUCKY

About sex?

ANGELA

Really? What kind...?

LUCKY

The necessary kind will do just fine.

ANGELA

Lying down kind...?

LUCKY

The kind that, you know, the kind that ensures your
inheritance.

ANGELA

You confuse me. Oh, yes... You wrote Byron's paper
and...funneled it. That's it. A bidding war.

ANGELA reaches for her bag, pulls out a
slip of paper, hands LUCKY the slip.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Take it. Take it. This amount will be in your new account
when the Swiss banks open--

(Looks at her watch.)

In, dear me, that's why I'm so tired... In three hours. You
can start on your new explanations to...the Pentagon, the
Army, whatever. Your new explanations.

LUCKY

(reads the slip)

A hundred thousand?

ANGELA

Not...enough?

LUCKY

You're crazy.

ANGELA

You're no different, Lucky Schwartz. Don't pretend... It's
only the amount and...the form...of our interest. We...have
still to...finalize things. Mutual investment.

LUCKY tears up the piece of paper.

Awkward silence.

LUCKY

What about my mother, Angela? Remember...? My mother?

ANGELA jumps up, rushes to the bathroom. Hesitates at the door, looks back, humiliated.

ANGELA

For what's at stake here, Lucky, I'd...

(Beat.)

Take it. Take the money. Give it away...

She stifles her desire to vomit.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

(with great effort)

As an orphan... Yes, an orphan... I serviced... For no more than an ice cream... I'd service... My uncle.

She vomits, locks herself into the bathroom. LUCKY slumps onto the table. Eventually, the toilet flushes.

ANGELA returns, her head dripping with water. Holds a towel to her face.

The door opens. CAMILLE and BYRON enter. CAMILLE, dress tattered, is drunk. BYRON is disheveled too.

LUCKY rises to his feet.

LUCKY

(sincerely)

Great to see you.

ANGELA

We've...made progress.

CAMILLE

(to ANGELA)

What happened?

ANGELA

What didn't!

BYRON

Not so fast, Angela. Camille knows.

CAMILLE stumbles.

LUCKY catches her. She pushes him away.

CAMILLE

Let go!

She sniffs, wipes her nose, goes to the bathroom.

ANGELA

(to BYRON)

Camille knows what?

BYRON

We had a long chat.

ANGELA

You fool.

BYRON

She asked me what was the worst thing Mr. Schwartz could find out about us... About me.

ANGELA

The worst? The worst? You fool! You fools!

CAMILLE returns, Kleenex box in hand. Distances herself from LUCKY.

BYRON

She badgered me.

LUCKY

(looks at CAMILLE)

Right. I'm going to help Professor Lederer. No strings.

BYRON

Huh...?

LUCKY

(to BYRON, sincerely)

No strings attached. I'll help you with the mistakes. It's all on my computer.

BYRON

I don't understand.

ANGELA

Byron! This is wonderful... Don't you see?

BYRON

(to LUCKY)

You're not serious, Mr. Schwartz. It's a prank, of course.

LUCKY

No prank.

BYRON
I don't understand...

ANGELA
I do.

LUCKY
(to BYRON)
Right. You can thank her.

BYRON
(to ANGELA)
For God's sake, what the hell have you agreed to? What did you do this time?

ANGELA
Actually, it's the first time I hear about any of this.

LUCKY
Oh, no, you don't. You suggested it to me, Angela. But you offered me money too.

BYRON
Good.

LUCKY
I don't need it.

BYRON
No money?
(To ANGELA.)
Did you mention the account?

LUCKY
She did.

CAMILLE
You're paying him...? To keep his mouth shut? This is so fucked up.

LUCKY
Thing is, this is D.o.D. Cash is a no-no. We'd be screwed, all of us, if you so much as offered me lunch.

ANGELA
Meaning...?

LUCKY
A bribe. I'd have to declare it...right away.

BYRON
Now I understand. Blackmail! That's what you're after.

LUCKY
I don't need the money.

BYRON
The painting, perhaps?

ANGELA
Shut up, Byron.

LUCKY
(to BYRON)
I don't know about paintings. Whatever you did a long time ago--

BYRON
(still surprised)
Suddenly doesn't matter?

ANGELA
Byron, take that stupid look off your face. This is the best news we've had all day. Say thank you.

BYRON
You plan to make me look good after... After I killed your mother?

ANGELA
(to BYRON)
Button your mouth!

A long silence.

LUCKY moves towards CAMILLE.

CAMILLE moves away.

BYRON
You plan to teach me mathematics, like I was a ghetto drop-out?

ANGELA
(to BYRON)
You're talking like a loser. Stop it!

BYRON
(to LUCKY)
Why?

LUCKY
I... It's the Christian thing to do.

BYRON
You'll assume, of course, that I have an introductory knowledge of calculus?

LUCKY
Sure.

ANGELA

Byron, stop your nonsense. I believe Lucky's sincerely trying to help you.

BYRON

(thoughtful)

I see, I see... Thank you very much, Mr. Schwartz. I'll consider it.

LUCKY

And cancel that numbered account pronto. Besides--

CAMILLE

We had great sex.

ANGELA

Keep your mouth shut, Camille.

CAMILLE

Hey, guys, hello there, I'm still here. Now that everything's settled, will you forgive me too?

LUCKY

(draws close to CAMILLE)

What have you done?

CAMILLE

They were really nice to me.

ANGELA

They?

CAMILLE

They really appreciated me. A lot.

BYRON

(to CAMILLE)

You're making things up.

CAMILLE

I made sure...they were wearing suits.

BYRON

This isn't the time, Camille.

ANGELA

(to CAMILLE)

Shut up!

CAMILLE

They were nice men, a bit stale, kind-of smelly and crinkly, but with bags of cash.

ANGELA

You're drunk.

CAMILLE

I can afford to be. Now.

She brings out a wad of cash, throws it onto the floor.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Well, all, what do you think now?

ANGELA

Where did you get that?

CAMILLE

(raving)

What a stupid question. Where do think, Mommy dear? You know what an hour with two horny old goats can bring.

BYRON

She's bluffing. She went to a bank machine.

CAMILLE

Oh, yes, and Dad told me everything. Lots more. Didn't you, Dad? So, what do you say now? I know all about Berlin.

ANGELA

Shut up!

CAMILLE

(to LUCKY)

You know, don't you? That's why you're here.

(To ANGELA.)

Julia Frondt. Remember her, Mother? Julia Frondt. Lucky's mother.

(To LUCKY.)

Didn't I tell you Dad told me everything? Julia Frondt was your mother. She'd been having an affair with my dad in the hotel where she worked as a maid. Very convenient, don't you think? Mom found out. With me on the way, Mom naturally went berserk. Anyone would have. Although, there's something about blackmail, some crap I still don't quite get. Anyway, this Mrs. Frondt, your mother, was found dead. She'd fallen six floors. Jumped. Apparently. Right, Lucky?

LUCKY

Yeah.

CAMILLE

(to ANGELA)

You keep blaming Dad. You should take--

ANGELA

Enough, Camille. Enough.

LUCKY

It's okay, Camille. I've already decided--

ANGELA

Open your eyes, Camille. He's destroying us--

CAMILLE

You're destroying us! You've been doing it for years! It's you. It's you! You'd do anything to separate me from Lucky!

BYRON hangs his head, quietly slips out of the room. No one notices.

ANGELA

You silly, silly girl!

CAMILLE

You parasite! You only leave me be when I feel ugly. Whenever I'm even remotely happy, you stick your butt in.

ANGELA takes a bottle of pills from her bag, opens it, shakes one out.

ANGELA

Take this.

CAMILLE grabs the whole bottle.

ANGELA

Give it back!

She makes an unsuccessful grab for the bottle. CAMILLE spins away, opens it.

CAMILLE

Get off me! This is chicken feed.

CAMILLE downs the contents.

ANGELA

Careful, careful!

CAMILLE staggers around the room. LUCKY tries to grab her. She elbows him out of the way.

CAMILLE

(to ANGELA)

I could sell this precious story of ours. Our dirty little secrets. Yeah, how 'bout that? Great idea, huh?

ANGELA

If I'd had a tenth of her opportunities... The schools...

CAMILLE

(pushing LUCKY away)

The whole fucking world knows your style, Mother. You're the laughing stock of the family. Miss Lunar Tantrum.

It's Dad people feel sorry for. Divorce? Huh! You won't dare get yourself divorced 'cause I'm sticking to my dad.

ANGELA

(to CAMILLE)

Keep quiet.

CAMILLE

(mocking)

Quiet, Camille. Quiet, Camille.

(Beat.)

Give it a shot. Let's see. Get yourself divorced before we go home.

She heads for the door.

ANGELA

Come back. You've done enough harm for one night.

CAMILLE opens the door, looks back.

CAMILLE

Harm? So now I've done us harm, have I? I hate both of you. That means you too, Mr. Long-As-It-Takes fucking Schwartz with a 't'. You really took me in. Big-time! I actually thought you liked me. I never want to see you again.

ANGELA

(quietly)

Don't say that.

CAMILLE

(to ANGELA)

You bitch!

(To LUCKY.)

Well, what do you think of our duet now? You're obviously over five feet tall, so naturally my mother approves of you.

LUCKY

(reaches out)

I love you.

CAMILLE

Oh, yeah?

LUCKY

Let's get out of here. Go somewhere. Talk.

CAMILLE

Talk. Talk...? What about, Lucky...? Ghetto dropouts...? Your killer topspin...? How you wanna do away with my boyfriend...?

Silence.

ANGELA sits down, sobs.

The hotel phone rings. LUCKY jumps to it.

LUCKY
(into the phone)
Yes, I'm listening... Are you all right...?
(Listens.)
No! No!
(Listens.)
Private eye... Vienna...? Impossible!

ANGELA
(gets up, approaches LUCKY)
Who is it? Byron?

LUCKY keeps listening.

CAMILLE moves back into the room.

LUCKY
(yelling, long and drawn-out)
No!

ANGELA
Give me that phone!

ANGELA tries to wrestle the phone from LUCKY but he fends her off. He continues to listen, then drops the phone, turns to ANGELA. ANGELA picks up the phone, puts it to her ear for a moment, returns it to the cradle.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
Byron. That was Byron. What did he say?

LUCKY slumps onto the bed.

LUCKY
How long did you know?

ANGELA
(to CAMILLE)
Leave us.

CAMILLE
Fat chance.

LUCKY
How long have you known about us?

ANGELA
(approaches LUCKY)
Byron's desperate. You mustn't believe him. Not a word.

CAMILLE

(yells)

Known what about us? What?

ANGELA

(to CAMILLE)

Leave us! Go to your room.

LUCKY

He didn't dare tell you. Not to your faces...

(Beat.)

How long have you known about me, Angela? About you and me.

ANGELA

You mustn't believe him. He's the worst negotiator.

LUCKY

(to ANGELA)

Did you kill her?

CAMILLE

(indignant)

Of course she didn't.

ANGELA

(calmly)

So...he got himself a private eye after all.

CAMILLE

Are you talking about Lucky's mother? Oh, please--

LUCKY

When did you know about us?

ANGELA

If you must know... Well, you had two brothers, you said. One was dead. Probability and statistics, right?

CAMILLE

What the hell are you two on about?

LUCKY

Apparently, Angela's Viennese uncle and aunt threw her out after she got pregnant. They paid Julia Frondt, their maid, to keep her baby.

(Pause.)

CAMILLE

What baby?

(Pause.)

LUCKY

(to ANGELA)

The ice cream. The uncle you serviced for an ice cream--

ANGELA

(in a normal voice)

I was fourteen. Oh, no. You know nothing about me, what I had to put up with in that house. Oh, but my aunt knew all about it. She knew everything. Everything. Right from the start. And, yes, so did our maid.

LUCKY

Julia Frondt.

ANGELA

A maid and blackmailing tramp.

LUCKY

Tobias's mother.

ANGELA

Julia Frondt. The bitch trapped Byron.

LUCKY

You killed her?

CAMILLE

Don't answer him, Mom! Don't answer--!

She sits on a chair and rocks.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)

Oh, dear God, please don't say any more.

LUCKY

(to ANGELA)

My father... Who exactly is my real father?

CAMILLE

Not again! Not again!

ANGELA

Your father was a mathematics teacher, a good tutor, one-on-one... He taught poor students too. Like you. He was kind. Jonas Brandstein... Professor... Stupidly kind. Yes, he would have been proud of you...

She approaches LUCKY, strokes his head.
LUCKY starts to sob.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

My uncle.

Silence.

CAMILLE

I don't get it!... I don't get it!...

ANGELA
(to LUCKY, softly)
I'm so sorry...

CAMILLE
Oh my God, oh my dear God!...

She jumps up, rushes to the door.

CAMILLE (CONT'D)
(to LUCKY)
Oh, Jesus Christ!... Jesus Christ! I'm your sister!

CAMILLE runs out.

Silence.

LUCKY, still on the bed, embraces
ANGELA, who stands beside him.

The hotel phone rings. ANGELA springs
to it, answers.

ANGELA
(into the phone)
I'll be right down.
(Slams down the receiver.)
Quick, Byron's jumped off the roof.

Dark.

SCENE 4: BEACH -- PREDAWN

In the orange light of predawn, the whoosh of the surf is heard rising and falling over the chatter of birds.

CAMILLE sprawls on the beach chair under the sunshade. Her open handbag, contents spilled, lies nearby. The low table lies upside down.

ANGELA and LUCKY enter. ANGELA rushes to CAMILLE'S side, kneels.

ANGELA

She's overdosed!

LUCKY pushes ANGELA aside, feels for a pulse.

LUCKY

She's been here for hours.

ANGELA

(gets up)

She'll come to. She'll come to. She'll come to...

LUCKY still feels for any sign of life.

LUCKY

(in horror)

She's dead!

Silence.

ANGELA

Oh, no. Not my baby. Not my Camille. You mustn't say that. She'd never die. She's much too strong.

LUCKY

She's dead!

ANGELA

Oh, no... Oh dear God no...

She falls to her knees, embraces CAMILLE. Suddenly sobs, gut-wrenching.

LUCKY'S cell phone rings. For a while he lets it ring, then flips it open, looks at it, puts it to his ear.

LUCKY

(into the phone, exhausted)

Yeah... It's done, Tobias... Yeah, you heard right... I avenged you, man... Yeah. Go to work now...

He flips the phone shut, puts it away,
falls to his knees.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

God forgive me.

Curtain.

END

Genre: Psychological drama

Further Reference:

<http://www.bandler.com/revange/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20211204201302/http://www.bandler.com/revange/> (accessed May 27, 2023).

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