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Basement

Robert McLane Daniels
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Basement.

Robert M.K. Daniels

Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing

Cleveland State University May

2013

submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

at the

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We hereby approve this thesis for

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Abstract
Basement
Robert M.K. Daniels

Basement is a play in two acts. I began writing this play at a time that I was contemplating a great deal on the idea of individual, human nature, and the consequences of routine, generational suppression of said nature. At the time that this play was written, stories surrounding human subjugation, rape, torture, and murder were very prominent in the news; and while the events of *Basement* have in no way been taken from any of these actual stories, the major themes of *Basement* were very heavily influenced by these stories of human bondage.

As a writer, I consider my primary job to be as a story-teller. And further, as a writer whose 'home genre,' so to speak, is playwrighting, I try to be mindful of the duality of the narrative being told in a play. That is to say, as a playwright, I try to create a visual narrative within the script of my play that is just as engaging, and essential to the over-all body of one of my pieces, as is the written narrative in the form of the words that I put down on the page.

To that end, with *Basement*, as with all of my plays, I wanted to write for any potential space that this play might be staged in. And, in doing so, I hoped to create an environment in *Basement*, into which the story of the play fully immerses the audience. I tried to accomplish this by putting the audience in a position similar to the character of the Young Man in the play. Being a character that does not know the entire story surrounding his current situation, and only receiving information about his situation at the same time as the audience, I hoped to create a fully realized reality for this play, immerse my audience into said environment, and leave any potential audience members taking the events of the story with them as they leave the theater.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACT I, SCENE 1.....	1
LIST OF CHARACTERS.....	1
PRODUCTION NOTE.....	1
ACT 1, SCENE 1.....	1
ACT 1, SCENE 2.....	4
ACT 1, SCENE 3.....	11
ACT 2, SCENE I.....	36
ACT 2, SCENE 2.....	48
ACT 2, SCENE 3.....	55

Characters: (In Order of Appearance)

Young Man: All- American, late teens- early twenties

Lucas: A nurse and hobby enthusiast, mid to late forties

Grand Mother: An octogenarian, a traditional homebody

Anna: A neighbor, late thirties to early forties

(A note on production: All stage directions that appear in the place of dialogue should be acted out as if it were dialogue. Any stage direction/ dialogue that is ended with an // should be repeated or acted out under the major action or dialogue of the scene.)

(ACT I; SCENE I, a black stage. No lights, at first.)

(A beep.)

VOICE: (A recording; a woman.) Hi honey! It's mom. I was just calling to see if you got the care package I sent you. I hope you don't get into any trouble for having the things I send you sent to you in old liquor boxes. Those are the only boxes that the grocery store would give me. I swear they gave me an old banana box one time, but they keep telling me the only boxes they really give out to customers are the liquor boxes. But anyways...let me know if you want me to call the dorm, just to make sure they know I'm not sending you alcohol. Oh hey, that's the other line beeping at me. It's probably Aunt Marge. But call me when you get this message; I just want to make sure everything is o.k. I love you honey, take care, and I'll talk to you soon.

(Another beep. The lights should start rising during the opening speech. Once they have risen, the setting is revealed to be a basement; sparse and sterile looking. A YOUNG MAN is tied down to a hospital bed. He has a blind fold over his eyes, and a gag in his mouth. Next to him is a tray holding several of the YOUNG MAN's personal effects. As the lights rise, the YOUNG MAN's phone should buzz on the tray, and stop just as the lights come to full. Enter LUCAS, middle aged, wearing medical scrubs. He crosses to the sink and washes his hands. The YOUNG MAN, still blindfolded cannot see, but should react to the slight noises LUCAS makes as he enters. Once LUCAS has finished the process of washing his hands, he puts on surgical gloves and crosses to the YOUNG MAN carrying a basin of water and a tooth brush.)

LUCAS: I need to brush your teeth. So, I'm going to need to remove that gag from your mouth. You can scream if you like. However, I assure you, no one will hear you. So, if it's all the same to you, I would greatly prefer it if you abstained from screaming.

Y.M.: (Whimpers. He won't scream.)

LUCAS: Excellent. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.
(LUCAS removes the gag from the YOUNG MAN's mouth.)

Y.M.: Help! Help!

LUCAS: (With one hand covers the YOUNG MAN's mouth and pinches his nose.)

Y.M.: (Struggles.)

LUCAS: I want you to understand that I am capable of maintaining this posture for quite a longer time than it will take for you to lose consciousness. After which time, you will awake with the gag back in your mouth.

Y.M.: (Struggles.)

LUCAS: And I hope you believe me when I say, I don't want you to lose consciousness. I was hoping that you and I could become better acquainted.

Y.M.: (Struggles. He is starting to lose consciousness.)

LUCAS: The choice is yours. Shall I remove my hand?

Y.M.: (Nods.)
(LUCAS removes his hand.)

Y.M.: Who are you? Where am I?

LUCAS: I should inform you that I do have an ample supply of Halothane.

Y.M.: What? What's that?

LUCAS: And I shant hesitate to render you, once more unconscious if I feel I have to.

Y.M.: I'm not screaming! I wasn't going to scream! I just asked who you were.

LUCAS: Young man, what about your current situation leads you to believe that my identity is any of your business?

Y.M.: (Ponders this question.)

LUCAS: That's what I thought. Now, if we can proceed, I'm going to need you to open your mouth.

Y.M.: What? Why?

LUCAS: I told you. I need to brush your teeth. Who knows where you've been. I need to have you clean for what's to come.

Y.M.: What's to come? What's to come?

(LUCAS holds the YOUNG MAN down and proceeds to brush the YOUNG MAN's teeth.)

LUCAS: Spit.

Y.M.: (Spits into a second basin LUCAS holds up to his mouth.)

LUCAS: Rinse.

Y.M.: (Takes a sip from a cup LUCAS holds up to his mouth, rinses and spits.)

LUCAS: There. Don't you feel better already? Now, about those clothes.

Y.M.: My clothes?

LUCAS: You stink. They need to come off.

Y.M.: (Begins to panic again.)

LUCAS: (Producing a bed sheet. He covers the YOUNG MAN, chin to ankles, with the sheet.) Have no fears. I will not let you, at any time, be completely exposed. I have experience in these matters. And I completely understand that you have your dignity; and I want you to know that, despite what you might feel is an overwhelming amount of evidence to the contrary, your dignity is of the utmost importance to me. And I know the particular stressors that come with being fully exposed in unfamiliar surroundings with people, about whom, you know practically nothing. Besides, I am a man of tradition. And I hope you believe me when I tell you that due to my reverence for tradition, it is important for me to not see you fully exposed until the moment is right.

(The lights in the basement slowly dim and rise several times.)

LUCAS: Drat.

Y.M.: What? What?

(LUCAS re- gags the YOUNG MAN.)

LUCAS: I hope you'll pardon my rudeness. But, it appears as if there are certain matters that I must, for the moment, make my priority. But, I hope you believe me when I tell you how much of a priority you are for me. Would you like me to put on some music for you?

(The lights dim and rise several times again.)

LUCAS: Damnit! I have to go. Please be patient, both with me and this whole situation. I'm certain that the time will not be long until we are, once again, reunited.

(LUCAS switches on a radio, and soft music plays. The YOUNG MAN begins to struggle as LUCAS exits the basement, turning the lights out before he goes.

SCENE 2: A kitchen; something simple, yet proud, but working class and clean. GRANDMOTHER is at the stove tending to several large pots. A cigarette burns in an ashtray on the kitchen table. GRANDMOTHER is on the phone.)

G.M.: And it's been how long you say? (Listens.) Where has she had to go to work? (Listens.) This world is certainly different from when we were young. I had never heard of the word divorce until my children had grown. And now our grand- children say it like grace. (Listens.) It's sinful. (Listens.) At least my Lucas has never been divorced. He brings enough disgrace to me; at least he has given me that. (Listens.) What? No! He is a good boy. How dare you say that about my grand- son? (Listens.) I see. And how old is Anna? (Listens.) I see. (Listens.) Ach, bardzo dobrze.¹ Yes, Ruby, I do agree.

(Enter LUCAS through the basement door.)

G.M.: (Into the phone.) One moment. (To Lucas.) Lucas, jesteś późno wracać do domu z pracy.²

LUCAS: Niestety, Nana.³ I had some errands to run.

¹ "Ah, very good."

² "Lucas, you are late getting home from work."

³ "Sorry, Nana."

G.M.: (Into the phone.) I have to go. Yes, that would be good. Now. Tell her to come to the back door. Yes.

(GRANDMOTHER hangs up the phone.)

G.M.: I didn't hear you come home.

LUCAS: I came in through the basement. I didn't know if you would have gone to bed already. I didn't want to wake you.

G.M.: I will sleep when you have eaten your supper.

LUCAS: I'm not very hungry right now Nana.

G.M.: (Begins to ladle out the contents of one of the pots into a bowl.)

LUCAS: (Crosses to table and snuffs out the unattended cigarette.)

G.M.: I wasn't finished with that.

LUCAS: I wish you wouldn't let your cigarettes burn, unattended.

G.M.: I żeby to nie była taka walka dla mnie, aby mój wnuk jeść swoją kolację.⁴

LUCAS: As I've said I'm not very hungry right now.

G.M.: Jest to dzięki uzyskaÅ dla chcących dbać o mojego wnuka?⁵

LUCAS: Niestety, Nana.⁶

G.M.: Sit.

(LUCAS sits at the table. GRANDMOTHER serves LUCAS diner before, herself, sitting, lighting another cigarette, and watching him eat. Several long beats pass.)

LUCAS: This is very good, Nana.

(Several more beats. LUCAS eats, GRANDMOTHER watches him eat.)

G.M.: Work was o.k.?

⁴ "And I wish it wasn't such a struggle for me to get my grandson to eat his supper."

⁵ "This is the thanks I get for trying to take care of my grandchild?"

⁶ "Sorry, Nana."

LUCAS: Fine.

G.M.: And that is all you did today?

LUCAS: Yes.

G.M.: (Gives LUCAS a look.)

LUCAS: What else do you think I would have done today?

G.M.: Staram się nie myśleć o tym.⁷

LUCAS: What was that?

G.M.: Your Polish...feh.

(LUCAS rises from the table.)

G.M.: Where are you going?

LUCAS: Supper was wonderful Nana. However, I have other matters that need my attention.

G.M.: The garbage needs to be taken out.

LUCAS: I will.

G.M.: And after I need you to fetch me a pot from under the sink.

LUCAS: I will.

G.M.: I tried, but it's too heavy for me.

LUCAS: I will do what you need me to do. Now if you will excuse me.

G.M.: I hate having to ask you to do things for me more the once.

LUCAS: I'm sorry Nana.

G.M.: It feels like I'm being an im...impo...what is the word?

LUCAS: An imposition, Nana. And you're not.

⁷ "I try not to think about that."

G.M.: Then please do what I am asking you to do.

LUCAS: I will. As soon as I attend to what I need to attend to in the basement.

(Exit LUCAS through the basement door.)

G.M.: Daj mi siłę.⁸

(GRANDMOTHER goes about some busy work as the lights come up on the basement. LUCAS goes about some busy work as well, washing his hands, preparing instruments, etc. Several beats before a knock at the kitchen door leading outside. GRANDMOTHER crosses and answers the door. Enter ANNA a woman in her late thirties/ early forties.)

G.M.: Thank you for coming over my girl. You are very sweet to indulge an old woman.

ANNA: It's no problem really.

G.M.: If you could put the sugar over by the stove for me, I would be very grateful.

(In the basement, enter LUCAS.)

LUCAS: Are you still awake? I didn't mean to wake you if you were asleep. I apologize for having to leave.

(LUCAS crosses to the YOUNG MAN and begins to remove the YOUNG MAN's shoes and socks//.)

(In the kitchen, ANNA crosses and sets the cup of sugar she is holding down by the stove, as GRANDMOTHER crosses to the kitchen table and sits.)

G.M.: (Lighting a cigarette.) Will you give to me one more favor child?

ANNA: Of course.

G.M.: Such a sweet girl. I am making a Barszcz for super, and the pot that I need is too heavy for me to get out from under the sink. Would you for me?

ANNA: Of course.

⁸ "Give me strength."

(ANNA begins digging under the sink.)

G.M.: Dobra dziewczynka.⁹

ANNA: Did you say something?

G.M.: Just that your grandmother is a lucky woman to have a sweet girl like you to look after her.

(In the basement, LUCAS should have finished removing the YOUNG MAN's shoes and socks and has placed them in a trash bag. LUCAS crosses to the YOUNG MAN and picks up a pair of scissors from a tray of instruments.//)

LUCAS: Do you have any family? I dare say that they can be more trouble than they are worth at times. Do you ever feel that way?

(LUCAS raises a corner of the sheet covering the YOUNG MAN and, with the scissors, cuts the YOUNG MAN's shirt down the front.//)

(In the kitchen, ANNA lifts a huge pot out from under the sink and places it on the stove.//)

G.M.: And strong too! I don't know how I would have done that without you.

ANNA: It really wasn't a bother.

G.M.: My Lucas really is very good about helping me out with things.

ANNA: I'm sure he is.

G.M.: The poor boy. He is so good. But he can be... misguided.

ANNA: I'm sorry to hear that.

G.M.: I'm sorry to ask, child, but would you mind filling the pot with some water for me, and turning the stove on?

ANNA: Not at all.

(ANNA sets about doing the work while GRANDMOTHER takes several puffs off of her cigarette, all the while watching ANNA.//)

⁹ "Good girl."

(In the basement, LUCAS cuts a slit down one of the YOUNG MAN's sleeves, and then repeats the process with the other sleeve.//)

LUCAS: The whole idea of family has always been a bit lost on me I suppose. I've never understood the need to maintain bonds with people simply because you share a certain amount of genetic material with them. Do you ever think about the credence people tend to put on the importance of 'the thickness of blood,' so to speak?

G.M.: How are you finding yourself these days?

ANNA: I'm sorry?

G.M.: You are feeling all right? Healthy?

ANNA: Yes.

G.M.: You look like you should eat something.

ANNA: I'm fine. Thank you.

G.M.: Your grandmother told me about your...situation.

ANNA: Yes?

G.M.: And the father?

ANNA: He...I...well...

G.M.: Yes my dear?

ANNA: It's just...

G.M.: Yes? Oh, there are some carrots in the refrigerator. Would you mind chopping those up for me while the water boils? I'm so tired today, and I don't want to bother Lucas. He works very hard and just got home from a shift.

ANNA: (Retrieves the carrots from the refrigerator and begins to mindlessly chop them.//)

(In the basement, now that the YOUNG MAN's shirt has been cut, LUCAS pulls it out from under the YOUNG MAN and places it in the trash bag with the YOUNG MAN's shoes and socks.//)

LUCAS: And what is blood? Most of the human body is made up of water. Did

you know that? Something like ninety eight percent of you, and me and, well, everyone, is nothing but water. Our skin is mostly water, our eyes, our organs, and yes our blood. So, I suppose it seems a bit odd to me that so much more importance is placed on something like blood, than on something like a sneeze or a stream of urine.

(In the kitchen. Several beats as ANNA chops and GRANDMOTHER watches and smokes.//)

ANNA: He was being unfaithful to me.

G.M.: Głupia dziewczyna.¹⁰ You should consider yourself lucky that he wanted to find that elsewhere.

ANNA: Oh?

G.M.: The job of a husband is to provide for his wife. Once you have children, the disgusting parts of marriage stop. If you had just waited for your first child, his infidelities would not have seemed so important.

ANNA: But he was lying to me.

G.M.: Men lie. They have fragile, little egos and they lie. It is the job of a wife to ignore the lies.

ANNA: Do you think so?

G.M.: Ha! You cannot separate a man from his lies. You just have to remind him what is important to live a good life so those lies don't consume them.

ANNA: I see.

(In the basement, LUCAS cuts a slit down one of the YOUNG MAN's pant legs.//)

LUCAS: Of course, you see, I do understand that the term 'blood' as used to reference familial relations is being used more or less symbolically. However, it is not lost on me that the other end of the usage of blood, at least symbolically, is pain and death and hurt. Do you find it funny that the same thing is used to represent both family and injury?

(In the kitchen.)

¹⁰ "Stupid girl."

G.M.: I was hoping you would be able to meet my grandson, Lucas, this evening.

ANNA: I've met him before.

G.M.: Oh?

ANNA: Here and there. Around the neighborhood. We haven't really talked.

G.M.: I think you would like him. He is so lonely. But he really is a good boy. I apologize for my grand-son's rudeness.

Anna: He isn't being rude. In fact, I really need to be going too. Grandmother will be wondering where I am. I'm glad I could help you. Good evening.

(Exit ANNA. GRANDMOTHER sits and smokes. In the basement, LUCAS cuts a slit down the YOUNG MAN's other pant leg./)

LUCAS: But perhaps I am being a bit cynical. Blood can also mean life. A life giving blood transplant. I'm a universal donor, so I'm sure there are lots of people all over the world who would be happy to have my blood. Just not my family. But, enough about blood, don't you think? I feel as if our evening is beginning to take a turn towards the macabre.

(LUCAS pulls the YOUNG MAN's pants out from under him, and places them in the garbage bag with the rest of the YOUNG MAN's clothes. LUCAS then begins to cut off the YOUNG MAN's under pants.)

LUCAS: I hope you're not beginning to think I'm some sort of scalawag or reprobate who has a preternatural fascination with blood. In fact, I have nothing but the highest hopes that your time here, while short, will be as pleasant as possible.

(LUCAS pulls the YOUNG MAN's under pants out from under the YOUNG MAN and places them in the garbage bag.)

Y.M.: (Reacts through his gag and restraints.)

LUCAS: Come now; my expectations for you and your experience here will never be realized with that kind of attitude.

Y.M.: (Reacts through gag and restraints.)

(The lights in the basement once again flicker. This time,

GRANDMOTHER can be seen in the kitchen flickering a light switch in the kitchen that is causing the lights in the basement to flicker.)

LUCAS: I swear that woman will be the death of me. I must once again beg for your forgiveness. I must hasten away again, for a moment. But I hope that now you see that you are my topmost priority, and believe me when I say I shall be back shortly.

Y.M.: (Reacts through gag and restraints)

(LUCAS exits, once again turning on the radio and turning off the basement lights before he leaves.)

(Scene 3. A black stage. The YOUNG MAN's phone can be heard vibrating on the metal hospital tray. There's a beep.)

Y.M.: Hey, you got me. Leave a message.

(Another beep.)

VOICE: (Male, a recording.) You dude! Where you at? You disappeared the other night. Mandigo says he saw you talking to Lauren Madigan. Lauren Madigan? Dude, I know we're officially classifying it as a dry spell, but Lauren Madigan's a crazy bitch bro. She'll probably drug you and like hold you hostage in her attic or something like that. Anyways, hit me up!

(Beep.)

VOICE: (Male, a recording.) Hey, it's Lauren from the other day? So, yeah, I had fun. Call me.

(Beep.)

VOICE: (Female, a recording.) Honey, its mom. I just wanted to remind you that dad and I are going camping this weekend. I just wanted to remind you in case you wanted to try to get a hold of us this weekend we probably won't have cell phone reception. Not that your father ever remembers to take his cell phone with him when her goes anywhere in the first place. Anyways. Hope you're staying out of trouble. Call me if you need anything. Love you honey.

(A beep.)

(The lights have risen during the recordings. The YOUNG MAN is still tied down to the bed as LUCAS enters, crosses and washes his hands

at the sink.)

LUCAS: You're awake? I can't say as I blame you. That can't be the most comfortable position to be able to receive any sort of restful sleep. I can't even begin to imagine what you must have gone through last night. The last shot I gave you must have worn off hours ago. I hope you believe me when I say that I am not usually this inattentive to my guests. Of course, I have never had one of you with me for this much of an extended period of time before this. So, you see, with you, this is new territory for me as well. Anyways.

(LUCAS puts on a pair of surgical gloves, crosses to the YOUNG MAN, pushing a tray of instruments. He picks up a syringe, fills it, and injects the contents into the YOUNG MAN's neck.)

Y.M.: (Struggles as the contents of the syringe take effect.)

LUCAS: There. Did I make it better? I hope I did. That's not going to render you completely unconscious. I do want you to have some memory of this experience. And maybe, this time, we can really begin to get to know each other.

(LUCAS sniffs the air.)

LUCAS: Oh, my. It would seem as if you've soiled yourself. I suppose that's to be expected. I do have to apologize for the amount of time you've had to spend down here. I'm usually more...on task. In any event, I needed to clean you up, anyways, so it's really no extra chore for me to clean up your nature taking its course.

(LUCAS crosses to the sink and turns on the hot water. He waits while the water gets scalding.)

LUCAS: I don't want you to feel embarrassed by this. You see, I'm a professional, and in my line of work, one grows accustomed to the sight of most bodily functions and the excretions produced as a result.

(LUCAS fills a basin with hot water, turns off the sink and crosses, with the basin, to the YOUNG MAN.)

LUCAS: And I hope you don't find me rude or needlessly crass by discussing the manner in what may seem like a casual manner. These types of things are so common for me that I discuss them as frequently and with the same amount of ease as you and your friends would discuss a book. Or perhaps, in your case, the most recent sporting match.

(LUCAS rolls back the sheet covering the YOUNG MAN so that it is only covering the YOUNG MAN's genitalia.)

LUCAS: You are in very good physical shape. That's encouraging to see. A young man who likes to keep himself physically active. That's healthy. Although, I suppose if the condition in which I found you is any indication of your other extra- curricular activities, you aren't as concerned about your health as your physical condition would suggest. I must confess, I do normally try to stay away from young men who participate in a more, shall we say, Bacchanalean lifestyle, but you look so much like my second one that I decided to make an exception.

(LUCAS begins to wash the YOUNG MAN. LUCAS should begin with the top of the YOUNG MAN's body, head, neck, shoulders, etc...and work his way down.)

LUCAS: He was a gorgeous boy. A real doll. I wish he had been my first. But I suppose our first is very rarely ever whom we want it to be. That's what I tell myself at least. Was your first who you wanted it to be? Oh, I beg your pardon. How rude of me to ask you a question when you have a gag in your mouth. I really do get swept up in the fantasy of all of this, and I hope you believe me when I say that in the fantasy you do not have the gag.

(Lights up on the kitchen. Enter GRANDMOTHER who crosses to the stove and begins to make breakfast. There should be a symmetry between the way she goes about doing her work and the way LUCAS goes about doing his.

In the basement, LUCAS has begun to wash the YOUNG MAN's arms. LUCAS sneezes.)

LUCAS: I apologize. I fear my allergies may be having an adverse reaction to whatever that...interesting scent you're wearing is. I hope you don't think that I'm sneezing because I'm getting sick. I'm quite physically healthy as well, you see. I never get sick. I take what, at times, seems like a maddeningly large amount of pills for that. Well, for that, and other things as well. B-12, fish and primrose oil, ginkgo biloba, double strength St. John's Wart, turmeric, valerian root... all purely holistic you see. But let's not us discuss my concerns regarding your choice in cologne or my allergies, if it's all the same to you. I'm worried that if I reveal to you too many of my eccentricities, it'll become somewhat of a turn off.

Y.M: (Pathetically struggles.)

LUCAS: I know this can all look very intimidating. Trust me; I'm somewhat of an expert when it comes to being intimidated. But I've found that mostly people are intimidated by what they don't understand. And I understand that you do not understand what's happening here.

(LUCAS begins to wash the YOUNG MAN's chest and stomach.)

LUCAS: Fascinating thing, memory. What would you tell me about if I were to ask you about your earliest memory? Would it be a time you played catch with your father? Your first kiss? Your first fornication? I'm cursed with memory, you see. I can remember the first house my family and I lived in, in this country. It was long before you were born. I was only four or five. Some would argue, I suppose, that it's our memories and what we remember that makes us who we are.

(LUCAS washes particularly close to the YOUNG MAN's private parts.)

Y.M.: (Struggles.)

(LUCAS places a hand on the YOUNG MAN's chest and holds him down until he finishes washing that area.// In the kitchen, GRANDMOTHER has begun to set the table for breakfast.//)

LUCAS: You see, I've been working in the geriatric wing of the hospital for years, and a day doesn't go by that I don't have to assist in some elderly, bed bound patient changing out of soiled linens. I do this every day.

(LUCAS begins to wash the YOUNG MAN's legs, ankles and feet.)

LUCAS: I've been quite pragmatic with my time, you see. I went to nursing school directly after high school, and obtained my degree with highest honors. So, I could, if I so desired, do this without paying attention, and often do. However, people today don't do enough of that, paying attention. Wouldn't you agree? It's tragic, really. The kinds of things that can slip by when someone isn't paying attention. The memories they miss. I need to wash your back -side. I'm now going to remove the restraints around your left wrist and ankle. Your natural reaction, of course, is going to be to strike out. I encourage you to not do so. However, I feel as if I should tell you that, if you do, I am prepared.

(LUCAS un-fastens the restraint around the YOUNG MAN's left wrist.)

Y.M.: (Although dazed, he flails his newly freed arm.)

(LUCAS holds down the YOUNG MAN's arm and begins to unfasten the restraint around the YOUNG MAN's ankle.)

LUCAS: I was saying I can remember the first house my family lived in after we moved to this country. We're originally from Poland, you see. My father moved himself, my mother, and their six children...this was before my younger siblings were born, you see...to this country. I was only two or three... I don't remember Poland.

(In the kitchen, GRANDMOTHER has crossed to the kitchen table and is taking a moment to smoke a cigarette while she waits for things to cook.)

G.M.: (Half mumbling to herself. Half almost prayer- like.) Moja córka prosiła mnie, aby pójść za nią do tego kraju. Czuła się jak ośmioro dzieci trafiało zbyt wiele w obsłudze. Hmmmph. Ona powinna już zatrzymał się pięć.¹¹

(In the basement, LUCAS has finished unfastening the YOUNG MAN's ankle restraint.)

LUCAS: I'm going to roll you now, on your right side. I do urge you do grab onto the bar so you do not injure yourself.

(LUCAS rolls the YOUNG MAN onto his right side. The YOUNG MAN grabs onto the guard rail on the side of the bed for support. LUCAS begins to wash the YOUNG MAN's back and backside.)

LUCAS: My father worked in a factory after we moved here. He was a gasket inspector, or some such. I don't really remember. What I do remember was the humidity here. Do you think that that is remarkable? That I can remember something like the humidity? It was like being suffocated by nothing. But you're being suffocated, you see, so there's something suffocating you. So, I suppose, it was more like getting suffocated by something all around you, that doesn't know you're there. Eight of us, originally, in that upstairs duplex. My sisters shared a bedroom, and my brothers and I slept on the floor of the living room while our parents slept on the pull out bed. And I remember the nights trying to sleep...in the humidity...and the smell of testosterone wrapped around me like a sheet.

(LUCAS towels off the YOUNG MAN's back and backside.)

¹¹ "My daughter begged me to come to this country with her. Eight children was becoming too hard for her to manage. Hhhmmmp. She should have stopped at five."

LUCAS: My father would work long hours in the factory...twelve, thirteen, sometimes fourteen or fifteen hour days. My mother was never able to seek employment. She was too busy having children and slopping those children to be able to maintain any sort of stable employment anyhow. And her purpose wasn't to have a job anyways. Her purpose, I found out after we moved to this country, was to get us children to go to sleep by the time my father returned home after one of his long shifts, and to wait for him to come home and crawl on top of her, and not make too much noise in the few moments it took my father to blow his gasket. That was crude. I apologize.

(LUCAS rolls the YOUNG MAN back onto his back and refastens the YOUNG MAN's wrist restraint.)

Y.M.: (Kicks his free leg.)

LUCAS: (Holds down the YOUNG MAN's leg as he refastens the ankle restraint.//)

(In the kitchen, GRANDMOTHER has begun to finish cooking breakfast.)

G.M.: Mieli tak dużo gdy przyszli tutaj. To było zbyt wiele dla dzieci. Pozwalając Lucas do zaangażowania się w bzdury, a nie podniesienie go za prawdziwy mężczyzna. Nigdy nie zrozumieć, jak szybko ludzie zapominają ciężka praca i dyscyplina. To jest grzeszne.¹²

(In the basement, LUCAS has finished refastening the YOUNG MAN's ankle restraint, and has begun toweling off the rest of the YOUNG MAN's body.)

LUCAS: There, I hope this is making you feel a bit more comfortable. I really do feel quite dreadful for leaving you in this straight for such a long time. It does not appear, though, as your skin has suffered any damage from my negligence. So you can take some comfort in that. I am. And I really am doing you quite a big favor by removing that awful cologne.

(LUCAS finishes toweling off the YOUNG MAN. He places the towel into the trash bag with the YOUNG MAN's clothes. In the Kitchen GRANDMOTHER flicks the light switch, and the lights in the basement slowly go on and off.)

¹² "They had so much when they came here. I think it was too much for the children Letting Lucas engage in nonsense instead of raising him to be a real man. I will never understand people's desire to forget hard work and discipline. It's sinful.

LUCAS: Her absolutely wretched timing! I've asked that woman time and time again to please not interrupt me when I'm down here.

(LUCAS begins to tuck the sheet back in around the YOUNG MAN.)

LUCAS: This is all about the process, you see. And she's actually interrupting the process quite severely. I really do have to go now. Only for a little while. Please believe me when I say that I am cognizant of the fact that you need nutrition and hydration in order to maintain healthy vital functions. And it is definitely imperative for you to be as vital as possible for what's to come.

(LUCAS finishes tucking the bed sheet in around the YOUNG MAN.)

LUCAS: I hope that last injection I gave you is still having an effect. It shall have to be the last one I give your for a couple of hours now. I do hope that you do try to get some rest while I'm attending to my other obligations. You are going to need all of your energy soon and I'm sure part of the reason for your fitful night last night was being kept awake by millions of thoughts rushing through your head. And besides, it's exceedingly hard for me to sleep in anything other than my own bed; so if you're anything like me, it will be difficult sleeping down here. But do try to get some rest. And I promise that I will return to you with all due haste.

(LUCAS crosses to the door leading to the rest of the house, turning on the radio and turning off the lights before he exits. In the kitchen, GRAND MOTHER is setting the table for breakfast, a cigarette dangling out of her mouth. If, her cigarette runs out while she is setting the table, she should immediately crush out the butt, and light another one. After a moment, enter LUCAS from the basement door.)

G.M.: (Without looking.) Witaj, Lucas.¹³

LUCAS: Hello Nana.

G.M.: Breakfast will be finished cooking soon.

LUCAS: I hope. I have several things I have to attend to before my shift this evening.

G.M.: (A look.)

LUCAS: It smells delicious, Nana.

¹³ "Hello, Lucas."

G.M.: Have you washed your hands?

LUCAS: No.

G.M.: (Goes about finishing breakfast.)

LUCAS: (Washes his hands.)

(Once LUCAS has washed his hands, he crosses to the table and sits. GRAND MOTHER serves breakfast. There is a pause as LUCAS goes about almost automatically eating his breakfast, and GRAND MOTHER watches LUCAS eat more than she eats her own breakfast.)

LUCAS: (Swigs down the contents of the glass in front of him.)

G.M.: (Stands, fills the glass again, sets it back in front of LUCAS and returns to her seat.)

LUCAS: This is delicious Nana.

G.M.: Slow down. You're eating too fast. Nie wiem, dlaczego przeszkadza, jeśli nie nawet cieszyć się, co gotuję dla Ciebie.¹⁴

LUCAS: I enjoy it. I just said I enjoy it, didn't I?

G.M.: Did you clean the gutters?

Lucas: Yes, Nana. I woke up early this morning and took care of it.

G.M.: And did you mend my shirt like I asked you to do?

LUCAS: Yes, Nana. I did that last night before I went to bed.

G.M.: You don't have to take a tone with me.

LUCAS: I wasn't taking a tone.

G.M.: Maybe you would like me to tell my hands to stop shaking so that I won't have to inconvenience you with asking for your help.

LUCAS: You weren't inconveniencing me. I just had a long day yesterday, and when I get home, I'd like to be able to have some time...

¹⁴ "I don't know why I bother when you don't enjoy what I cook for you."

G.M.: You were very rude to Anna earlier.

LUCAS: (Gives her a blank look.)

G.M.: My friend's Granddaughter! Ładna, młoda kobieta w domu i nawet nie starał się dać jej drugą myśl? To więcej niż na to zasługujesz. Co się z tobą dzieje?¹⁵

LUCAS: Niestety, Nana.¹⁶

G.M.: You spend too much time in the basement.

LUCAS: I know you think I do.

G.M.: I just don't understand why you spend so much time down there. What do you do that's so important?

LUCAS: As I was just trying to explain to you; I like to have time to myself. Work can be harrowing, and with my responsibilities to you and the house...

G.M.: Read. Go, read in the park. Maybe you'll meet a nice young lady so you wouldn't have to spend all of your time reading by yourself in the basement.

LUCAS: I enjoy having a space with some solitude.

(LUCAS continues eating.)

G.M.: Powoli.¹⁷

(LUCAS slows his eating. He eats in silence for a moment as GRAND MOTHER finishes her cigarette and snuffs it out.)

G.M.: Mrs. Gould called earlier.

LUCAS: I trust, despite my rudeness, Mrs. Gould's granddaughter was able to make it home quite safely.

G.M.: (Lighting another cigarette.) She thinks her night nurse is stealing

¹⁵ "An eligible young woman in your home, and you don't even bother to give her a second thought? What is wrong with you?"

¹⁶ "Sorry, Nana."

¹⁷ "Slowly."

from her.

LUCAS: That would be exceedingly unfortunate if that were the case.

G.M.: Szkoda.¹⁸

LUCAS: Does she know empirically that her night nurse is stealing from her?

G.M.: Emp- emp... What is this emp...

LUCAS: Does she have proof?

G.M.: Proof? I tell you that one of my oldest, dearest friends is being stolen from... by somebody she is supposed to trust, no less... and you are asking me for proof?

LUCAS: Niestety, Nana.¹⁹ I just believe that if Mrs. Brown is going to become accusatory of her hired help, then she should have solid evidence of any transgressions occurring.

G.M.: (Lights another cigarette, watches Lucas eat for a moment.) Złe rzeczy dzieją się, gdy ludzie patrzą na "dowód".²⁰

(She stands and crosses to the stove.)

LUCAS: Pardon me? I wasn't able to understand that.

G.M.: Your Polish is terrible!

LUCAS: Niestety, Nana.²¹

G.M.: Co zrobić, aby zasłużenie cię? Bóg mi pomoże.²² Are you finished?

LUCAS: Yes, Nana.

G.M.: Good. Then I want you to go check on Mrs. Gould.

LUCAS: Nana, please. I really am very tired. It was a long day at work...

G.M.: Go check. I don't trust that night nurse of hers. I want you to make

¹⁸ "It's too bad."

¹⁹ "Sorry, Nana."

²⁰ "Bad things happen when people look for proof."

²¹ "Sorry, Nana."

²² "What did I do to deserve you? God help me."

sure she hasn't hired some simpleminded cow.

LUCAS: I think it would be in extremely poor taste if I were to infringe myself onto another nurse's...

G.M.: Come tell me when you get back.

LUCAS: Nana, I...

(GRANDMOTHER lights another cigarette, and in one, fluid motion has gathered up LUCAS's place setting and has returned to the sink with her back to LUCAS. LUCAS stands and looks at the basement door. After a moment, he turns and begins to exit the other way.)

LUCAS: Wszystko, co powiesz, Nana.²³

(Exit LUCAS as lights fade on kitchen. After a moment, lights up, outside. There is a door, nothing fancy, and most of the scene should be lit from the light above the door. It is just before dawn. Enter LUCAS, through the door. After LUCAS has hastened away from the door several paces, enter ANNA.)

ANNA: Excuse me.

LUCAS: Yes?

ANNA: (Holding out one of Lucas' brightly colored surgical gloves.) You left these.

LUCAS: (Snatching the glove away from her.) Thank you.

ANNA: You must be very dedicated to your job.

LUCAS: I beg your pardon?

ANNA: A nurse who comes pre ready with his own sterile gloves seems like he's awfully dedicated to what he does.

LUCAS: I'm leaving for work from here, you see. I have a shift that begins soon. Although there was a matter of quite some importance I had hoped to give some attention to before my shift started.

ANNA: I'm sorry.

²³ "Anything you say, Nana."

(LUCAS begins to exit.)

ANNA: I'm sure grandmother is grateful that you found her missing jewelry.

LUCAS: Please, do not think to mention it again. Well if you will excuse me. I don't want to be late.

ANNA: Yes. It seems like it's getting dark so early lately.

LUCAS: Yes. It often does at this time of day at this time of year.

ANNA: Yes.

(LUCAS begins to leave.)

ANNA: I hope your grandmother is doing well.

LUCAS: As well as can be expected. Thank you. Good evening, Miss Gould.

(LUCAS exits. ANNA turns and goes back through the door. Through the door is a kitchen, in which ANNA stops, almost catatonic; as if she is waiting for a command of some kind.)

G.M. II: (From off stage.) אנה?²⁴

ANNA: Yes grandmother. It's me.

G.M. II : (Off stage.) הבחור איפה?²⁵

ANNA: He's gone home.

G.M. II: (Off stage.) לקרות שהולך לך לומר יכול אני.²⁶

ANNA: Yes grandmother.

(ANNA automatically goes about making brownies. This whole process does not have to be shown, but the parts that are shown should be methodical and robotic. As the light outside the kitchen starts to suggest day breaking, and the morning getting older, the lights should come up on LUCAS's GRANDMOTHER's kitchen. GRANDMOTHER is cooking and smoking. She should be listening to a mass on the radio, or watching one on a small, portable television.)

²⁴ "Anna?"

²⁵ "Where's the young man?"

²⁶ "I could have told you that was going to happen."

After a moment, enter ANNA. She is clutching a Tupperware container to her midsection, and she timidly knocks on the door frame leading into the kitchen as she enters.)

ANNA: (Trying to shout over the radio.) Hello? (Knocks.) Hello!

(ANNA moves into the kitchen a bit more and catches GRANDMOTHER's eye.)

G.M.: (Startled by Anna.) Chrystus zachować mnie!²⁷ (Turning the music off.) It's rude to enter into a person's home uninvited. I have a gun.

ANNA: I'm sorry. I knocked.

G.M.: It's even ruder to scare an old woman in her home, after you have entered, uninvited.

ANNA: I knocked. The door was open. I'm sorry. I should have knocked louder. Grandmother is always saying I'm sneaking up on her. I just wanted... I'm sorry.

G.M.: (A purposeful sharp change in attitude.) Sweet child! Come in, sit down. Let me get you something to drink.

ANNA: (Crossing to table.) I can really only stay for a minute. Grandmother wanted me to make you these brownies, to thank you for sending your grand-son over last night.

G.M.: I bet that thieving cow of a night nurse didn't dare steal anything with a man in the house.

ANNA: No. Actually, Lucas was able to find the things my grandmother thought Sarah had stolen.

G.M.: What did you say?

ANNA: Oh, I'm sorry. Sarah's the night nurse. It seems she just moved a couple of my grandmother's things when she was dusting.

G.M.: You say you brought brownies?

ANNA: Yes. Try one?

G.M.: (Stands, crosses, busy work.) That would be so sweet if I wasn't

²⁷ "Christ preserve me!"

allergic to walnuts.

ANNA: Oh.

G.M.: I suppose your grandmother forgot that. Przeklęty, stara krowa!²⁸ But please, help yourself.

ANNA: I couldn't. I brought them for you.

G.M.: Yes, and so they are my brownies, and you, my sweet young thing, are my guest. So please, help yourself.

(GRANDMOTHER has returned to the table from the cupboards and has placed an empty plate and glass in front of ANNA.)

ANNA: Thank you. I'm not hungry.

G.M.: (Crossing to the refrigerator, taking out a carton of milk.) If you don't take one, then Lucas will eat them all. And he's getting fat.

(GRANDMOTHER pours ANNA a glass of milk.)

ANNA: I suppose a half of one wouldn't hurt.

G.M.: Dobra dziewczynka.²⁹

(GRANDMOTHER returns to the stove and continues her cooking.)

G.M.: How is your grandmother feeling today?

ANNA: It's one of her good days.

G.M.: Where is it you work? Mrs. Gould told me, but a woman of my age, I'm lucky to remember to wake up at all in the mornings.

ANNA: Oh, I work in the cafeteria over at Emerson Elementary.

G.M.: Powinny być we własnej kuchni.³⁰ It's such a shame you are not cooking for a husband and your own children.

ANNA: Yes.

²⁸ "Cursed old cow!"

²⁹ "Good girl."

³⁰ "You should be in your own kitchen."

G.M.: A woman at your age, and not married? And not married because of a divorce? (Disapproving noise.)

ANNA: (Focusing on the table in front of her. Noticeably trying not to make eye contact with GRANDMOTHER.)

G.M.: You are still young enough to have children. But you are wasting your time with your head in the clouds all of the time.

ANNA: Yes?

G.M.: (Not a question.) You want children.

ANNA: I suppose. Maybe, someday.

G.M.: Of course.

(Enter LUCAS, in a hurry. He is carrying a take out container of food. He begins to cross to the basement door.)

G.M.: Ah, Lucas!

(Lucas freezes in his tracks.)

G.M.: Zawsze pędzi tędy jak próbujesz coś ukryć jesteś wstydzic.³¹

LUCAS: Of course not.

G.M.: Anna jest tutaj.³² Say hello.

LUCAS: Forgive me. I've forgotten myself after a most harried day. I trust you are doing well Ms. Gould?

G.M.: To "panienko."³³

ANNA: I'm doing very well, thank you Lucas.

LUCAS: Delighted to hear.

(LUCAS turns to resume his course for the basement door.)

³¹ "Always rushing through here. Rushing through here like you are trying to hide something you are ashamed of."

³² "Anna is here."

³³ "It's "miss.""

G.M.: Anna has brought us... well, you some brownies.

LUCAS: I see.

ANNA: My grandmother wanted me to make them to thank you for helping this afternoon.

LUCAS: Entirely unnecessary, I assure you.

G.M.: Sit, try one.

LUCAS: I couldn't. I just ate at work.

G.M.: Lucas, you are being rude by not at least trying one of these brownies Anna has taken the time to make for you.

(LUCAS crosses to the table, breaks a corner off of one of the brownies and eats it.)

LUCAS: Truly delightful. I can't thank you enough for your thinking of me Miss Gould. Now, if you will both please excuse me.

(Before either woman can say anything, LUCAS has turned and exited through the basement door.)

G.M.: Niewdzięczny chłopak!³⁴

ANNA: I should go.

G.M.: Please, you must excuse Lucas.

ANNA: It's not that. It's just grandmother will be wondering where I am.

(ANNA stands and begins to exit.)

G.M.: Anna, I was just thinking. If your grandmother is feeling well tomorrow, you and she should come over for dinner.

ANNA: Oh, I don't know if she'll be up for that.

G.M.: Ask her.

ANNA: I suppose I could.

³⁴ "Ungrateful boy!"

G.M.: You would be giving such a gift to this old woman. Lucas and I never get to have any company.

ANNA: I'll ask her.

G.M.: I've been making my Barszcz with homemade pork uszka all day, and there is far too much here for Lucas and I to eat on our own.

ANNA: I'll make sure she knows.

G.M.: Dobra dziewczynka.³⁵

ANNA: I hope Lucas enjoys the brownies.

(Exit ANNA. Lights fade on GRANDMOTHER as she lights a cigarette and returns to her cooking. Spot up on the basement. LUCAS is finishing washing his hands at the sink. Once he is finished, he should dry them and put on his surgical gloves./.)

LUCAS: I can't tell you how sorry I am about the timing of this experience. My work schedule and my grandmother are not normally so...prominent a problem in these proceedings. However, I have brought you some food and something to drink. We need to keep your strength up, don't we?

(LUCAS crosses with the take out container to the YOUNG MAN/./.)

LUCAS: I am going to feed you now. Which means I need to remove your gag. I trust that you remembered what happened the last time I removed your gag, and you cried out?

Y.M.: (Nods.)

LUCAS: Excellent. So, I trust I can count on you to not scream again?

Y.M.: (Nods.)

LUCAS: Excellent. I hope you enjoy what I brought for you.

(LUCAS removes the YOUNG MAN's gag. He then holds a bottle of water with a straw in it up to the YOUNG MAN's mouth.)

LUCAS: This is water. Open.

³⁵ "Good girl."

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth and takes the straw in his mouth and drinks.)

LUCAS: Slowly. I don't want you to get sick.

Y.M.: Why are you doing this?

LUCAS: I hope you understand how important this process is to me. Even if you do not understand the process its self, or even what specifically is happening around you, I do hope you understand that you are going to be part of something very special to me.

(LUCAS scoops up some food on a plastic fork. The process of feeding the YOUNG MAN should be LUCAS giving the YOUNG MAN a bite of food, and then a sip of water. This process is important to adhere to because this is how patients in a hospital or nursing home are fed.)

LUCAS: Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a bite of food//.)

LUCAS: You see I never understood what exactly was happening in my parents' bed in our first home in America. I kept my eyes closed when I heard my father enter after he got home from work. I still heard everything. I could never understand...my mother seemed like she was in so much pain, she tried to remain quiet, but my father was always quite rough sounding with her...and I could never understand why mother would allow father to continue to do those things to her night after night.

Y.M.: I have a family. A mother.

LUCAS: Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a drink of water//.)

LUCAS: Once, he came home, and found me pretending to be asleep. I was up late reading by flash light... something by Tennessee Williams I believe, and I did not hear my father's return to the apartment. My father walked in and caught me with what, as it turns out, was reading material he found profoundly offensive.

(LUCAS takes the water bottle away from the YOUNG MAN's mouth

and scoops up more food on the fork.)

LUCAS: Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a bite of food//.)

LUCAS: Although now I wonder if it was the specific piece in which I was engaged or if he would have reacted in the same manner had he caught me with any other book. But he caught me and beat me. I doubt that you're surprised in learning that I was hit by my father. It's not something I tend to share with very many people. Nor do I share with very many people that on this particular paternally administered beating, I grew excited. And he saw that I was excited, which only made him beat me harder.

"Chcesz tego? Lubisz to ty mały pedałem?"³⁶ I can still hear him.

Like a lullaby. Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a drink of water//.)

LUCAS: But, just like fathers before him and, no doubt like the generations of fathers to come after him, my father beat me when he found me reading a book that was offensive to his dogmatic sensibilities. Well, needless to say after that I became most astute and observing the bedtimes that my parents set down for me.

Y.M.: Please. I just want to go home. To my family.

LUCAS: I'm sure you do. Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a bite of food//.)

LUCAS: I know this is obviously not the most pleasant experience for you, but please believe me when I say that it is quite necessary. (Lucas begins to hum. After a moment the humming turns into Luke tunelessly singing the song "Happy Days" as he works.)... Them good ol' days are here again. Happy days are here again. Open.

³⁶ "You want this? Like it you little faggot?"

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a drink of water//.)

(Once the YOUNG MAN has drank some water, LUCAS gives him another bite of food. The process of LUCAS feeding the YOUNG MAN should continue during the next bit with ANNA. Lights up on ANNA's door. She should seem as if she is sneaking out. She shuts the door quietly behind her. She seems anxious at first, almost as if she is waiting for something to happen. After a moment, and nothing does, a visible sense of relaxation should come over ANNA. This is a rare moment of quiet for her. She produces a hair brush, sits and begins to absent mindedly brush her hair. She does this for the rest of the scene. Lights up on the kitchen. GRANDMOTHER is on the phone.)

G.M.: (Into the phone.)No, she does not know him like I do. You are going to have to trust me.

(In the basement.)

LUCAS: You see, what I remember the most about those nights on the floor of the living room, other than the sound that is, was the smell. It smelled like humanity, and insides and chlorine. It smelled nearly as bad as this basement did before I fixed it up. It certainly smelled worse than this wretched hospital food I'm giving you. Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a bite of food//.)

LUCAS: The auditory and olfactory assaults that I had to endure throughout my formative years rather turned me off to ideas regarding amorous behavior. And that didn't sit very well, I'm afraid, with my older brothers. You see, I was already a small child. Niesmialy my mother used to call me. And when they weren't forgetting I existed, my brothers used to take turns trying to make a 'man' out of me. So, when I turned twelve and had not yet even considered an encounter with a member of the opposite sex, my brothers took some umbrage. I suppose I should be somewhat grateful for their treatment of me. After all, if they had not done what they had done, then I would have had absolutely no idea what I was doing when it came time for me to truly express my love. Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a drink of water//.)

G.M.: It is all arranged then. You will send her back over here in a couple of hours. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Good. I will call you later.

(GRANDMOTHER hangs up the phone and begins writing out a list.)

LUCAS: Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a bite of food//.)

LUCAS: My family was never a big observer of holidays or birthdays, and there was no exception made for any of my birthdays. Until the day that I turned twelve. Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a drink of water//.)

LUCAS: See, my oldest brother was something of a notorious cad, and he knew of several, shall we call them professionals, that could help in what my brother felt was an unnecessary blemish to my character. So, on my twelfth birthday, my oldest brother took me to see one of his friends and left her with strict instructions to make a man out of me. I was scared at first. But I think that's only natural. Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a bite of food//.)

LUCAS: This was not the type of woman that I was used to being associated with and a young man's first encounter with a prostitute can be a...formidable experience. However, I soon became anxious that the fear that I was experiencing was what was making it difficult for me to become fully excited about the gift my brother gave me. I was scared until we started. Scared until I recognized familiar sounds and smells... and I felt like I was home again. Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a drink of water//.)

LUCAS: But I still wasn't very excited by the whole thing. I tried and tried, and despite my best efforts I could not seem to reach the proper lever of

interest I needed to have in order to fully participate in the experience. I grew scared again. I feared that if I could not perform, my brother would beat me. And then my father would see my less than pristine condition, and he too would beat me. And I became excited.

(At this point, ANNA's grandmother calls to her from inside the house. ANNA stands and enter the house./.)

LUCAS: So excited that I decided to become more...proactive in my participation. But what to do? Where to look? There were so many moving parts, bouncing things, noises and the like I did not know where to explore first. I reached up and I grabbed the young woman's breast and I squeezed. I squeezed so hard that my fingernails dug in and I drew blood. Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a bite of food/./.)

LUCAS: She screamed and slapped me. She called me a "little pervert" as she toppled me out of the bed. But that smack. The sting of her hand on my cheek, the fear of the experience... of what my brother was going to say and do to me... it was all quite stimulating in a way that I had never experienced before. When I entered high school, most if not all of my male peers would like to brag about their various conquests. But that's how I knew most of them were lying about their exploits. Not a one of them spoke about the sensations they experienced other than the most rudimentary feelings. Open.

Y.M.: (Opens his mouth.)

(LUCAS gives the YOUNG MAN a drink of water/./.)

UCAS: And I've come to believe that that is due to people placing far too high of a value on what they experience through their skin. And what's skin anyways? I was in that "woman's" apartment for nearly half an hour and didn't experience the slightest excitement brought about by anything I was experiencing through my skin. Open.

Y.M.: (Turns his head.)

LUCAS: All full? You've barely eaten anything though.

(In the kitchen, GRANDMOTHER has finished her list and has begun flickering the light switch in the kitchen again. In the basement, the

lights flicker on and off.)

LUCAS: (Responding to the lights.) Give me strength, what does that woman want now? Don't worry my lovely. I'm not going to let her distract me from you again.

(A rattling can be heard, like someone trying to open a locked door, followed by pounding.)

G.M.: Lucas! Lucas! Chodź tu! Potrzebuję Cię w tej chwili!³⁷

LUCAS: In a moment, Nana!

Y.M.: Who was that?

G.M.: Lucas!

LUCAS: W chwili!³⁸ No one. Not anybody you need concern yourself with.

G.M.: I'm waiting Lucas! I hope I don't live the rest of my life out doing so!

Y.M.: Help! I'm down here!

(LUCAS once again covers the YOUNG MAN's mouth and pinches his nose The YOUNG MAN struggles. LUCAS picks up a near by syringe and injects its contents into the YOUNG MAN's neck.)

LUCAS: And we were having such a lovely evening! You see? You see what happens? It's not enough that she has to keep spoiling things? You have to spoil them too?

(The YOUNG MAN ceases his struggling. Once he does, LUCAS puts the gag back in the YOUNG MAN's mouth.)

LUCAS: I promise you I will return with all due haste. I hope you believe me.

(LUCAS crosses to the basement stairs, and stops for one last look at YOUNG MAN. LUCAS turns on the radio and turns out the light leaving the basement in darkness. LUCAS enters the kitchen.)

G.M.: Did I hear a voice down there?

LUCAS: It was the radio. Was there something you needed Nana?

³⁷ "Lucas! Lucas! Come up here! I need to see you this instant!"

³⁸ "In a moment!"

G.M.: It is time for you to wash up and go to bed. You have a busy day tomorrow.

LUCAS: Pardon me? I was just in the middle of something. I will go to bed once I have finished what I was doing.

G.M.: (Snuffs out her cigarette and lights another one.)

LUCAS: I'm not tired, Nana. I still need to unwind after a long shift.

G.M.: First thing in the morning I need you to go to the market. I haven't had time to make bread recently. Mr. Kalhooski puts out fresh bread every morning.

LUCAS: That's the market on the other side of town.

G.M.: Take the forty- two. It lets you off two blocks from there. Here is the rest of the things I need.

(GRANDMOTHER hands LUCAS the list, digs in her blouse and pulls out several bills.)

LUCAS: You want me to get up at five in the morning just so you can have fresh bread?

G.M.: I want you to get up earlier then five. It will take you at least an hour to get to the market, and I want you to get there by five. And I want you to go so we can have fresh bread. I assume you'll be eating it aslo

LUCAS: This is a bit out of the question, don't you think?

G.M.: That is why I want you to go upstairs, get washed up, and go to bed now. You have to get up very early.

LUCAS: Nana, I'm sorry, but...

G.M.: Lucas! Dlaczego dajesz mi tak ciężko się z tym? Chcę tylko, aby ci dobrą kolację, i dajesz mi ciężko! Jak mogę sprawić, że dobry z jadalnią, jeśli nie ma odpowiednich składników, aby zrobić to z? Co jest tak ważne w piwnicy, że nie można zrobić coś dla mnie? Spędzasz dużo czasu w tej piwnicy, bo mnie nienawidzisz! Wiesz, że jestem stary i trudno mi zejść po schodach, i udać się tam, aby dostać się ode mnie! I wszystko, co chcesz zrobić, nie będzie sam w ostatnich latach życia, a może przynieść trochę komfortu dla tych wokół mnie, i nie może być na tyle grzeczny,

aby przejść do rynku dla mnie, i dostać artykuły spożywcze na kolację!³⁹

LUCAS: (Overlapping Grand Mother's speech.) Nana! Please! I work hard all day! I just want a little bit of time to myself every now and then! Nana! Nana, please! Dlaczego nie chcesz mnie słuchać tylko raz? Chcę być twoim dobrym chłopcem! Ja! Chcę być wszystko, co może. Nie tylko dla ciebie, dla każdego.⁴⁰ It's not to get away from you. Proszę mi wierzyć, kiedy mówię, że Nana! To nie jest! Są rzeczy ... Nie chcę do ciebie obrzydzenie. I nie chcę, żebyś był sam, ale there are razy, kiedy muszę być z dala od ... rzeczy. Nie tylko ty.⁴¹

(Grand Mother stalks off to the stove pointedly turns her back on Lucas and begins stirring one of the pots.)

G.M.: And to think my daughter died bringing her children into this world.

LUCAS: Supper smells delicious, Nana.

G.M.: (Stirs the pot.)

LUCAS: Is there anything I can do to help you finish cooking?

G.M.: You can go upstairs, get cleaned up, and go to bed.

LUCAS: But-

G.M.: (Moves in some way, so that her hand comes into contact with the pot she is stirring.) Ach! Moja ręka!⁴²

LUCAS: Nana!

(LUCAS rushes GRANDMOTHER to the sink and runs cold water over her hand.)

³⁹ "Why are you giving me such a hard time with this? I'm just trying to make you a good diner and you are giving me a hard time! How can I make you a good diner if I don't have the proper ingredients to do it with? What is so important in the basement that you cannot do this one thing for me? You spend too much time in that basement because you hate me! You know I'm old and its hard for me to go down the steps, and you go down there to get away from me! And all I want to do is not be alone in the last years of my life, and maybe bring a little comfort to those around me, and you cannot be a good enough boy to go to the market for me, and get groceries for diner!"

⁴⁰ " Why won't you just listen to me for once? I want to be your good boy! I do! I want to be everything I can. Not just for you, but for everyone."

⁴¹ " Please believe me when I tell you that Nana! It's not! There are things...I don't want to disgust you. And I don't want you to be alone, but there are times I need to be away from...things. Not just you."

⁴² "Ah! My Hand!"

LUCAS: How does that feel?

G.M.: The burn is not bad.

LUCAS: You need to be more careful Nana.

G.M.: I just worry about you so much. Stop, my hand is fine.

(Grandmother returns to the stove.)

LUCAS: If you're all right, I'm just going to go get ready for supper.

(LUCAS exits into the house. GRANDMOTHER lights up a cigarette as the lights fade to black. End Act I.)

Act II

(Scene 1: The next morning. Lights up on the kitchen, GRANDMOTHER is at the stove, cooking breakfast. She is listening to the radio. Lights up on the basement, the YOUNG MAN's phone can be heard buzzing on metal. After a moment, the buzzing stops, and then a beep.)

Y.M.: (Recorded voice.) Hey, you got me. Leave a message.

(Beep.)

VOICE: (On voice mail.) Honey, it's mom. I know I'm probably just worrying and being silly, but I haven't heard from you in a while. And your sister got the results from her ultra sound back, and I didn't want to tell you to your voice mail. But, it's a boy! You're going to have a nephew!

(Lights up on the kitchen. GRANDMOTHER is, as always, cooking at the stove.)

VOICE: But, you haven't called me back, and you always call me back. God, I'm sure you're just busy rushing, and doing whatever you boys do when you pledge.

(There is a knock at the door. GRANDMOTHER finishes what she is doing at the stove during this last line, before she crosses to the door.)

VOICE: But call me when you get the chance, honey. And tell Mandingo that he'd better be taking care of my little boy. Or else the whole frat will see those pictures of the two of you, in your undies in that mud puddle

when you were three. I love you sweetie. Call me.

(Beep. GRANDMOTHER crosses and answers the door.)

ANNA: Hello?

G.M.: Ah, yes. (She crosses and turns off the radio.) Good morning child! You are up and out early this morning.

ANNA: Oh, I'm sorry if I'm intruding. But I was just going to make breakfast for my grandmother, and she said she wanted toast. And, well, apparently I didn't know that we were getting so low on bread. And I should have remembered to get some the last time I went to the store...

G.M.: You would like to have some bread?

ANNA: If it's not too much to ask.

G.M.: God does work in mysterious ways. I'm also out of bread, you see. Fortunately, I sent Lucas to the market this morning to pick some more up. If you can spare a couple of moments, I'm sure he'll be home soon.

ANNA: I'm not sure...

G.M.: Really. Lucas will be home soon. Any minute now.

ANNA: Grandmother will be wondering where I am. It might be faster if I just run to the store myself.

G.M.: Nonsense!

ANNA: No, really. Grandmother will be waiting for her breakfast so I really do need to get back. I wouldn't have bothered you if I had known...

G.M.: Sit! Keep me company for a couple of minutes. Lucas was asking about you the other night.

ANNA: Lucas?

G.M.: Yes. He's such a good boy.

ANNA: I'm sure.

G.M.: And a good provider. (Seeing that Anna has not moved from her

original spot.) Why do you still have your coat on? Stay! And if you won't sit, here, do this old woman a favor and set the table.

(GRANDMOTHER hands out a stack of dishes in ANNA's direction.)

ANNA: Like I said, I should get home. Grandmother...

G.M.: Your grandmother is fine. If she's not, she can call.

(GRANDMOTHER tries to hand ANNA the stack of dishes again, and ANNA once again does not take them. At this point GRANDMOTHER begins to stare down ANNA in the same way she does to LUCAS when she's trying to get something she wants. After a pause, ANNA acquiesces, takes the stack of dishes from GRANDMOTHER, crosses to the table takes off her coat and begins to set the table for diner.)

ANNA: I really can't stay.

G.M.: (Seeing ANNA is only setting two places.) You must set the whole table.

ANNA: (Gives GRANDMOTHER a confused look.)

G.M.: I always set a full table. It's tradition. You never know who will stop in for a meal, and you must always have enough places for guests to sit.

ANNA: Did you say your grandson was...asking about me the other night?

G.M.: Yes, yes. He was asking if you were o.k., if you had everything you needed in your current...condition. He really is a good boy. He has a provider's instinct. And you are such a good nurturer. Tylko to, co moje potrzeby Lucas.⁴³

ANNA: I beg your pardon. I didn't understand that last part.

G.M.: Yes, Lucas is a good boy. Good provider. I just wish the boy didn't need so much guidance.

ANNA: Guidance. Ah, yes.

G.M.: That boy wouldn't know what to do without someone there to look out for him. He's a bit...what is the word... Zgubił się?⁴⁴ (Realizing that Anna probably doesn't know Polish.) Like he doesn't know where he

⁴³ "Just what my Lucas needs."

⁴⁴ Lost?"

is.

ANNA: I think you mean lost.

G.M.: Ah, yes. Lost. I think he has been his whole life. Since he was young. He needs someone to remind him where he is sometimes.

ANNA: He forgets where he is?

G.M.: No! Głupia dziewczyna.⁴⁵ Take, for example, I send him to the store. Simple thing, right? Something that is done every day? But I have to explain to him why it is important for him to go to the store. What, does he think that things like bread just show up on the table? He's lost, yes. But being lost, it is hard for him to remember what is important sometimes.

ANNA: Like, going to the store?

G.M.: No. The store was a distraction. To keep his mind off of what isn't important. You see?

ANNA: I think so.

G.M.: Ach, dobrze.⁴⁶ A man needs his privacy... time alone to do his hobbies. But a man needs to be reminded what is truly important in this life. (Pause while she stirs for a moment, watching Anna set the table out of the corner of her eyes.) How are you finding yourself this morning my girl?

ANNA: I'm well, thank you. Just a little tired I suppose.

G.M.: Well, it's no wonder. A woman your age, in the family way, divorced, and forced to work some job. You should have a home, and a husband to take care of. Surely that isn't why your marriage ended in disgrace.

ANNA: Because of my job? No...

G.M.: I do not understand what could be so bad that could make someone take back an oath they swore in front of God. Is it because it took you so long to give him children?

ANNA: What?

⁴⁵ "Stupid girl."

⁴⁶ "Ah, good."

G.M.: You really are no...how you say..."spring chicken" to be having your first child.

ANNA: I really should go.

(ANNA stands and begins to leave. However, before she can...)

G.M.: (Holding out a stack of unfolded, cloth napkins.) Please, fold these and put them on the table.

(ANNA stops, uncertainly. After a moment she returns to the table, taking the napkins with her, and sits at the table. She folds in silence for a moment as GRANDMOTHER attends to the pots on the stove.)

ANNA: You were saying before about men and their secrets. Steven had plenty of his own.

G.M.: That is your husband?

ANNA: Former husband, yes. He was hardly ever around when we were married. Which was just as well for me. We moved in with grandmother right after we got married because Steven had a hard time holding down a job. So we moved in with grandmother, just until we got on our feet. It wasn't long after that that Steven would start disappearing. I never knew where he went. Grandmother told me I should never ask him. Just be a wife, have his children and pray that he would find a job and stop drinking.

G.M.: You tried to change him too much.

ANNA: I suppose. Or I would have if he had been around more. He did come home enough so that when I did get pregnant, I didn't even know for the longest time. I tried not to pay attention when we... and so I didn't know for three months that part of Steven had stayed around. I was happy. I was going to be able to finally do what grandmother and my mother had always told me I needed to do. And I had decided to name the child Steven if it was a boy and Ruth if it was a girl. But Steven still wouldn't come home. When he did finally come home I... He and grandmother were fighting, shouting at each other. And he wouldn't believe that the child was his. He called me a slut. And the next thing I remember is being on the ground... This time, when he crawled on top of me, he seemed heavier than usual.

G.M.: He was probably bloated with alcohol.

ANNA: It wasn't that. Well, entirely. But he was focusing all of his weight on

my midsection. I tried screaming, but he had pushed all of the air out of my lungs. I wanted grandmother to call someone, the police, a neighbor, but all I could hear in the back ground was her praying. Until Steven had beaten me so bad that I had passed out.

G.M.: And the baby?

ANNA: The doctor said I was lucky, but it didn't seem as if Little Steven had suffered too much trauma.

G.M.: You are keeping the name, then? Steven?

ANNA: I don't know. I suppose.

G.M.: I think it is best to forget the father and move on. You want what's best for your child, don't you?

ANNA: I do. I just worry sometimes that even if I change the name the baby will have something in him, something of his father that...I won't be able to change.

G.M.: You are his mother. It is your duty to make him change. Even if he doesn't want to, or think that he can.

ANNA: I suppose.

(ANNA has finished folding the napkins, and GRANDMOTHER watches for a moment as ANNA places them around the table.)

G.M.: Hmmph. Nikt nie jest doskonały.⁴⁷

ANNA: I'm sorry. I didn't catch that.

G.M.: All men in the world would be lost, like my Lucas, if it wasn't for women taking care of them. Do you ever plan on getting remarried? Do you want more children after this one?

ANNA: There's a chance, I suppose.

G.M.: At children, or marriage?

ANNA: Either. Both. Maybe.

G.M.: You do not want to sit idly for too long, child. The past is in the past,

⁴⁷ "Hmmmph. Nobody's perfect."

and you need to leave that behind you.

ANNA: You sound like grandmother. The divorce was only a couple of-

(Enter LUCAS. He is carrying a paper bag filled with groceries. He sets the bag down and notices the set table and all of the pots that GRANDMOTHER is cooking with. He then notices ANNA.)

LUCAS: Here are the items that you asked for Nana. Now, if you will excuse me, I will be in the basement.

G.M.: We have a guest. It would seem as if Anna and her grandmother are also benefitting from your trip to the market this morning.

LUCAS: How fortuitous. Now, if you will excuse me, I really can't be distracted from my obligation...

G.M.: Co robieś, że było tak ważne, że nie można iść do sklepu dla swojej babci?⁴⁸ Now, go upstairs and get cleaned up for breakfast. You do not want to embarrass yourself any further in front of Miss Brown.

LUCAS: Nana! I really must insist...

G.M.: Rób co mówię!⁴⁹

LUCAS: Nana, please! I have done everything you have asked of me. I really don't think it is too much to ask for to have some private time to pursue my own ends.

G.M.: You selfish brat! I have done nothing but cook for you, provide you comfort and guidance! Ostrzegam cię synka. Idź. Wash Do. Kolacja.⁵⁰

LUCAS: Jesteś przyczyną tego!⁵¹

G.M.: Jestem przyczyną nic! Jak śmiesz? Kiedy myślę o tobie. I tylko Ty!⁵² Doesn't Anna set a lovely table Lucas? She will make someone a good wife someday.

LUCAS: I'm sure she will make someone an excellent wife, Nana.

⁴⁸ "What were you doing that was so important that you could not go to the store for your grandmother?"

⁴⁹ "Do as I say!"

⁵⁰ "I'm warning you little boy. Go. Wash. For. Diner."

⁵¹ "You are the cause of this!"

⁵² "I am the cause of nothing! How dare you? When I am thinking of you. And only you."

G.M.: Jesteś zhańbienie siebie. Ona jest piękną dziewczyną. Co się z tobą dzieje?⁵³ Quickly now, Lucas. While I finish making breakfast. I hope the bread you bought is fresh.

LUCAS: It is, just like you asked me to buy. And I'm sure it will be no less delicious if I eat it after I finish doing what I was doing without interruption!

(LUCAS exits through the basement door.)

ANNA: I really should be going.

G.M.: Maybe you should. (Lights a cigarette.) Tell me, child. Could your grandmother spare you for a little while this afternoon?

(Lights fade on the kitchen as the rise on the basement. LUCAS has a notebook open on his tray, and is measuring the Young Man's various body parts and recording his findings in the notebook.)

LUCAS: (After recording several numbers in the ledger.) I wish I'd had the presence of mind to bother recording my second time as I am doing with you right now. See, I don't have any of his measurements, but I'd like to think that you and he are nearly similar. Of course, he was sixteen at the time, and he probably grew since then. (Pause.) Or would have grown.

Y.M.: (Reacts through his blindfold, gag, and restraints to what LUCAS just said.)

(LUCAS removes the sheet from the YOUNG MAN's legs and feet.)

LUCAS: If I knew then what I know now, if you would permit me to turn a phrase, I would have recorded more empirical data... for posterity's sake. Because you see, after the debacle that was my first time, my second time, with James, is what made me the man that I am today.

(LUCAS measures the YOUNG MAN's left leg and foot.)

Y.M.: (Cries through his gag.)

LUCAS: James Knight. I still remember his name like I remember his sounds, his feel, his scent. It's a story old as time really. In high school, he was the popular athlete, dated all of the, what most of my classmates would consider the most attractive females, came from an affluent

⁵³ "You are disgracing yourself. She is a lovely girl. What is wrong with you?"

family. And I... well need I tell you that in high school I was somewhat antonymous to James Knight. And as the story usually goes, he and all of his pack would pick on me. I will spare you the details of what he would do. I believe that you are still cognizant enough to use your imagination. It got to the point where the harassment I received at the hands of James and his friends became not merely routine for me, but an expectation.

(LUCAS records some of his findings in his notebook. He then begins to measure the YOUNG MAN's right leg and foot.)

LUCAS: I remember once when I was Freshman in high school... James was a Sophomore, he was out for a week for some illness or another. This was merely six months after the inception of our relationship, but that week, for me, was lost.

(LUCAS records some numbers in his notebook and covers the YOUNG MAN's legs and feet back up with the sheet.)

LUCAS: I didn't know what to do. Here I was, a creature of habit... a slave to routine if you will... and James had failed to uphold his end of the unspoken promise he made to me the first time he ever shoved me to the floor of the boy's lavatory and kicked me in the sternum.

(LUCAS takes the YOUNG MAN by the left hand.)

Y.M.: (Clenches his fists.)

LUCAS: Open your hand, please.

Y.M.: (Clenches his fists tighter.)

LUCAS: Open your fists.

Y.M.: (Whimpers and clenches his fists tighter.)

LUCAS: Open your damn hands! (Strikes the YOUNG MAN.) Why can't you see that I'm trying to help you? And I can't do that unless you do what I say!

(LUCAS notices the YOUNG MAN's negative reaction.)

Oh dear. Now look what I've done.

(Lights up on the kitchen. GRANDMOTHER is sitting at the table, praying.)

LUCAS: I hope you believe me when I tell you how sorry I am for that display. Would you please open your hand for me?

Y.M.: (Opens his left hand.)

(LUCAS measures the YOUNG MAN's hand.)

LUCAS: Interesting numbers, very interesting.

(LUCAS begins to measure the YOUNG MAN's right hand and arm.)

LUCAS: I'm glad to tell you that everything is very much in proportion. I'm getting better at picking out you proportional young men. My third's middle toes on both of his feet were longer than his big toes. I had to get rid of those before I did anything else.

(LUCAS records his measurements in his notebook.)

LUCAS: What a mess that turned out to be. Although, I suppose I should have expected a lot of blood when cutting anything off of anyone. I suppose the whole incident speaks to a lack in my skills in applying a tourniquet.

Y.M.: (Reacts through his blindfold, gag, and restraints.)

(LUCAS uncovers the YOUNG MAN's chest and torso, down past his belly button.)

Y.M.: (Cries through his gag.)

LUCAS: Are you crying? Why you are! You are crying.

(LUCAS begins to measure the YOUNG MAN's chest and abdomen.)

LUCAS: I really must apologize. As I keep trying to explain to you, this all seems like such an unpleasant experience, but it isn't. Once you have full scope of the entire picture. Here, I know what's going to happen. And I believe, on some level, you know what's going to happen as well. Because everything down here is mine. I'm in control. And I hope you're starting to see what a beautiful gift it is that I'm giving to you.

Y.M.: (Pleading, unintelligible words through the gag.)

LUCAS: But I think it will take something out of the experience if you don't discover what that is for yourself.

Y.M.: (Crying, dejectedly through the gag.)

LUCAS: If you must have a hint. What I'm giving you has quite a bit to do with the freedom from having to be in control. Isn't it marvelous?

(LUCAS records some numbers in his notebook.)

Y.M.: (Reacts through his blindfold, gag, and restraints.)

LUCAS: I wonder if that's what James looked like when he cried. I never got to see James cry. Not that he ever seemed like the crying type. I doubt if things had worked out differently, and he and I ended up spending evenings in watching "Old Yeller" on the couch, he'd shed a tear for the wretched cur.

(LUCAS covers the YOUNG MAN's chest and abdomen back up.)

LUCAS: No, the last time I saw him, it was mostly rage in his eyes. Rage and confusion. But how else is one supposed to look when one is having the life strangled out of him? You see? You should consider yourself fortunate. That whole debacle was messy. And not in the kind of way that intrigued me. It was messy in the impromptu kind of way. James didn't let me plan; he didn't know how good I can be at being in control. He didn't let me plan; it was his fault it became so messy, so... spontaneous. I've improved a lot on my technique since then. Except, I suppose, when the removal of exaggerated appendages is involved. But you don't have to worry about that.

G.M.: (Half to herself, half as if she were praying.) Bóg daje mi siłę. Próbowałam tak trudno być cnotliwy. Ale pokazały mi, że nadal trzeba zmyć tak wiele grzechów. Co należy zrobić? Jestem grzesznikiem.⁵⁴

(LUCAS has begun measuring the YOUNG MAN's head.)

LUCAS: Do you like the set up I have here?

Y.M.: (Reacts through his blindfold, gag, and restraints.)

LUCAS: I apologize! How uncouth! To ask you that question when you are wearing a blindfold. But please believe me when I tell you that we have everything we need. And in my experience, I enjoy being down here more than I enjoy being around most people. (He throws the

⁵⁴ "God give me strength. I have tried so hard to be virtuous. But you have shown me that I still have to wash away so many sins. What should I do? I'm just a sinner."

towel into the garbage can. He then takes his gloves off, throws them in the garbage can, and replaces them with a fresh pair.) In my sanctum, everything is quiet, and clean. It's cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Wouldn't you agree that we have quite a perfect little hideaway?

Y.M.: (Unintelligible mumbling through the gag.)

LUCAS: Before this place, I had to strangle James.

Y.M.: (Reacts to that information through his blindfold, gag, and restraints.)

(LUCAS records some numbers in his notebook.)

LUCAS: Now, it would seem as if I need to do something about those finger nails. I really have no idea as to the specifics of your activities when I found you. But judging by the filthy state your finger nails are in, I don't think I want to know the specifics.

(LUCAS crosses to the sink, turns on the hot water, and removes the pair of gloves he had on.)

LUCAS: And when you clenched your fists so tightly, you dug into your flesh. And I can't have you doing that. To your flesh, or mine.

(LUCAS begins to wash his hands.)

LUCAS: And I hope you will cooperate and let me trim your nails. I hope you aren't like my fourth. He was stubborn. His nails had to come out all together.

Y.M.: (Reacts through blindfold, gag and restraints.)

(In the kitchen, GRANDMOTHER flickers the light switch and in the basement, the lights flick on and off.)

LUCAS: What could she possibly want now?

Y.M.: (Reacts through his blindfold, gag, and restraints.)

(The lights in the basement flick on and off.)

LUCAS: Please excuse me for what is turning out to be my continued rudeness. But it appears that, yet again, there are other matters that need my attention.

Y.M.: (Reacts through his blindfold, gag, and restraints.)

LUCAS: But I will return. I promise.

(LUCAS exits, stopping to turn on the radio and gaze back at the YOUNG MAN one more time before he exits. The lights fade on the basement as they come back up on the kitchen. GRANDMOTHER is sitting at the table, smoking a cigarette.)

G.M.: She is a lovely girl.

LUCAS: Who? Are you still going on about the neighbor girl?

G.M.: Not Polish, though.

LUCAS: I really do not appreciate being ambushed like I was this evening.

G.M.: Jaki człowiek spędza tyle czasu w piwnicy? Nie wiele o człowieku!⁵⁵

LUCAS: I-

G.M.: To trwa już wystarczająco długo! Jesteś zakłopotanie. Już nie. Będziesz znów zobaczyć, że młoda kobieta.⁵⁶

LUCAS: I-

G.M.: You will see her again. It has all been arranged. She will be waiting for you at the park tomorrow afternoon. W słońcu, w których oczach Boga widać.⁵⁷

LUCAS: Tak Nana.⁵⁸

G.M.: And you will not be an embarrassment.

LUCAS: Tak Nana.⁵⁹

G.M.: Good. Posprzątać ten bałagan.⁶⁰

(GRANDMOTHER crushes out her cigarette, stands and begins to exit.)

⁵⁵ "What kind of man spends to much time in a basement? Not much of a man."

⁵⁶ "This has gone on long enough. You are an embarrassment. No longer. You are going to see that young woman again."

⁵⁷ "In the sunlight, where God's eyes can see you."

⁵⁸ "Yes, Nana."

⁵⁹ "Yes, Nana."

⁶⁰ "Clean up this mess."

LUCAS watches her leave as lights fade.)

(Scene II: Lights up, outside. A park bench. It's a bright, sunny day.

ANNA is sitting on the park bench. She should be wearing something shabby, but that would suggest that she put a lot of thought into what she has on. Enter LUCAS.)

LUCAS: Miss Gould.

ANNA: Hello Luke.

LUCAS: Lucas.

ANNA: Oh. I'm sorry.

LUCAS: Would you like to go for a walk?

ANNA: A walk?

LUCAS: Yes. The information pamphlet I read informed me that there is a foot path along here.

ANNA: Oh

LUCAS: We don't have to, of course.

ANNA: Could we just sit here for a while? If it's all the same to you?

LUCAS: Whatever suits you.

(LUCAS sits. Pause.)

LUCAS: I hope the day is finding you well.

ANNA: Hmmm?

LUCAS: I hope the day is finding you well.

ANNA: Oh, yes.

(Pause.)

ANNA: It's nice being out of the house.

LUCAS: I suppose for you it would be.

ANNA: All I do is work and take care of grandmother.

LUCAS: Oh.

ANNA: Not that I'm complaining. You know how it is.

LUCAS: Do I?

ANNA: Living with your grandmother.

LUCAS: Ah, yes.

ANNA: And you're a nurse?

LUCAS: Yes. A licensed practical nurse.

ANNA: Oh. That sounds so important.

LUCAS: I suppose it is. To a point.

ANNA: Does it ever feel like all you do is work, and take care of your grandmother?

LUCAS: No.

ANNA: No?

LUCAS: I keep my attention occupied with personal pursuits.

ANNA: Oh?

(Pause.)

ANNA: Can I ask like what?

LUCAS: I apologize. I'm quite certain I said those were personal.

ANNA: Oh.

(Pause.)

ANNA: It is nice being outside, though.

LUCAS: (Non-committal grunt.)

ANNA: Doesn't that cloud look like a bird cage?

LUCAS: Ms. Gould?

ANNA: Anna. Please.

LUCAS: May I ask you a question?

ANNA: You just did. (Week laugh.)

LUCAS: I beg your pardon?

ANNA: It was a joke. What did you want to ask me?

LUCAS: You do understand that this whole thing is a set up, don't you?

ANNA: I'm not sure I understand.

LUCAS: Us, here, in the park. It's all a play. To try and set the to of us up, so to speak.

ANNA: I know.

LUCAS: You do?

ANNA: And it that such a bad thing?

LUCAS: I-

ANNA: I mean, we never would have gotten this opportunity to get to know one another better if it wasn't for our grandmothers "setting us up." You don't think that's a good thing?

LUCAS: I suppose. To a degree. Yes.

ANNA: My ex husband never let me go out and meet anyone.

LUCAS: Oh. You were married?

ANNA: Yes. The divorce just became finalized. Didn't your grandmother tell you?

LUCAS: Well, yes. I just didn't want her or I to seem like a pair of gossip-mongers.

ANNA: News does travel fast in the neighborhood.

LUCAS: (Becomes visibly more uncomfortable.)

ANNA: I'm sorry. Did I say something?

LUCAS: Not at all. Please continue what you were saying about your ex-husband.

ANNA: Oh, right. I was just saying how lonely I was when I was married to him.

LUCAS: That's a shame.

ANNA: And, I know we saw each other, as kids, growing up, from time to time. But I never really knew who you were. And I didn't have a lot of friends growing up, or going into the marriage. So, once I got married, it just got harder and harder to find people to be around. Do you know what I mean?

LUCAS: Ms...Anna. I was one of twelve siblings, growing up in what you know is a rather confined space. Solitude is something that I treasured when I was a child.

ANNA: Is that why you used to go out to those woods, behind the park so much?

LUCAS: I beg your pardon?

ANNA: When we were little. Probably like nine or ten. You probably don't remember this, but there was that one time I found you...

LUCAS: In that thorn bush...

ANNA: You do remember!

LUCAS: I was ten.

ANNA: And you were in the woods...

LUCAS: By that old barn. I used to go there to read. It was quiet there. Quite lovely.

ANNA: That old barn used to give me the creeps. The other kids in the neighborhood used to say that it was haunted.

LUCAS: I'm sure they did.

ANNA: Can I ask you a question now? In addition to the question I just asked

you, of course.

LUCAS: (As if finally getting the joke, chuckles.) I suppose.

ANNA: I used to see you out there a lot...

LUCAS: You did?

ANNA: At the “haunted” barn.

LUCAS: I see.

ANNA: I sometimes followed you there. When we were little. I guess you never noticed me. Until that day you were walking back, and you tripped, and...

LUCAS: ...rolled down that hill...

ANNA: Right into that thorn bush. I didn’t know what to do! Until then I just followed you; I didn’t want to disturb you or anything. But when you fell into that thorn bush, and I was watching you try to get out. And your clothes were getting torn...I just had to help you.

LUCAS: Did you say you had a question you wanted to ask me?

ANNA: What? Oh, yes. Why did you like it out there so much?

LUCAS: By the “haunted barn”?

ANNA: Exactly.

LUCAS: Truthfully? I adored the smell.

ANNA: The smell?

LUCAS: Precisely. In the shade of the trees, it always smelt like was about to rain. And the decomposing wood and mildew and mold of the barn...reminded me of nature growing, and taking over what humans had built. As a child, I was allergic to practically everything; wheat gluten, dairy, rag weed, animal dander, pollen. But by the haunted barn, everything seemed so clean, and fresh and new. It was someplace where neither my allergies or my older brothers could find me.

ANNA: How funny.

LUCAS: Funny?

ANNA: I mean that in a good way. Quarky.

LUCAS: I see. And you Ms. Gould? What's your fascination with me?

ANNA: Fascination? I wouldn't say I had a...

LUCAS: You just admitted to one!

ANNA: I don't...

LUCAS: As a child you were infatuated with me...followed me! And now...here you are again. What do you want from my Grandmother and me?

ANNA: Want?

LUCAS: You must want something. Everybody wants something.

ANNA: I- I just like you. And your Grandmother.

LUCAS: You do?

ANNA: Yes. She reminds me of my grandmother.

LUCAS: And you don't find your grandmother to be, at times, over- bearing?

ANNA: Oh, she can be. That's just how she shows me she loves me. When it gets to be too much, I just kind of go in my head, and ignore her.

LUCAS: Oh?

ANNA: I hope you don't think I'm awful for saying that! I really am lucky to have my grandmother in my life. And you are too. With yours! My ex-husband loved me. And if I'd listened to my grandmother more then maybe he wouldn't have left me.

LUCAS: Oh?

ANNA: I'm sorry! I always say the wrong thing! Does it make you uncomfortable when I walk about my ex- husband? I can be so stupid sometimes. I'm sorry.

(Pause.)

LUCAS: Not at all.

ANNA: What?

LUCAS: It doesn't make me uncomfortable. When you talk about your former husband.

ANNA: Not that we need to keep talking about him. Or that I want to!

LUCAS: It's fine. He left you?

ANNA: Yes. I don't know why he left.

LUCAS: You must have some idea.

ANNA: He just did. It was New Year's Eve. I had just told Brad that I was pregnant, and, well things didn't go well with that. But he surprised me by taking me to a New Year's party that one of his friend's was throwing. I'm sure Brad was feeling guilty about losing his temper when I told him about the pregnancy. And I think taking me out on New Year's was his little way of making that up to me. I couldn't drink, of course. But, I thought, maybe a sip of champagne at midnight; and maybe a kiss from Brad. But we got to the party...it really was lovely; and I thought a few of his friends might even have liked me! And then, at 10:30, he just left. He said "I can't do this anymore" and left.

LUCAS: I see.

ANNA: I guess it's kind of funny. That Brad would've taken me out in the first place. I sometimes think that grandmother had something to do with that.

LUCAS: It seems they always do, doesn't it.

ANNA: Yes.

LUCAS: Please, you must excuse me.

ANNA: You're not leaving?

LUCAS: I must.

ANNA: I'm sorry. I've done something.

LUCAS: You have. And now, there really is a matter that needs my immediate attention. Please, excuse me.

(Exit LUCAS. Anna sits, in silence and confusion for a moment as lights fade on park bench.)

Scene III. Lights up on GRANDMOTHER's kitchen. She is, as always, cooking and smoking a cigarette. Enter LUCAS.)

G.M.: Czy miło czas?⁶¹

LUCAS: Lovely.

G.M.: Nie jest zbyt piękny. Jesteś w domu tak szybko.⁶²

LUCAS: I did what you asked. I spent time with the insipid cow from down the street. I have jumped through more than enough hoops for you over the last several days, and now you will leave me alone.

G.M.: I hope you didn't speak to that young woman in the same way you speak to me.

(LUCAS exits through the basement door. Lights up on the basement. LUCAS enters in a panic.)

Y.M.: (Reacts through his blindfold, gag and restraints to the noises LUCAS is making.)

LUCAS: I apologize. I apologize. Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry. I try, I try, I try, I try. You should not have to experience me like this. You deserve better than this. You deserve better than me. (He crosses to the sink and turns the hot water on. He begins to frantically wash his hands. He begins to calm as he does this.) Needless to say, the reality of this day for me has fallen quite short of my expectations. But what day isn't like that when you look at the bigger picture, I suppose? I really should learn to lower my expectations.

(In the kitchen, GRANDMOTHER is flickering the lights.)

LUCAS: Stop it. (The lights continue to flicker.) Stop it. (They continue.) Stop it!

VOICES: (Same as before.) I'm sorry sir, but she's lost too much blood. Lucas is a loser, Lucas is a loser. W dół, pod ziemię, światło Boga jest wstyd im.⁶³

⁶¹ "Did you have a nice time?"

⁶² "Not too lovely. You're home so soon."

⁶³ "Down below the earth, the light of God is shameful to them."

(GRANDMOTHER has crossed to the basement door and has begun to knock.)

G.M.: (Calling.) Lucas! Lucas! Chcę z tobą porozmawiać już teraz!⁶⁴

LUCAS: Why can't she just go away? Go away!

G.M.: Nie więcej czasu sam ukrywa się od oczach Boga.⁶⁵

VOICES: (Same as before.) Twoja córka umiera wykonywania jej od Boga zadanie. Nie ma wstydu w tym. Ona pozostawiła wiele dzieci, które przyniosą dumę do rodziny.⁶⁶

(GRANDMOTHER opens the basement door. She begins to enter. As she does so, LUCAS bolts up the stairs, pushing her back into the kitchen.)

LUCAS: Why do you insist on constantly harassing me?

G.M.: Niewdzięczny bachor! Kogo myślisz, że jesteś ze mną rozmawiać w ten sposób?⁶⁷

LUCAS: What do you want?

G.M.: Did I ever tell you how I met your grandfather? (She turns down the heat under the pots on the stove and crosses to the table and sits in her usual chair.) I was still living in Poland; was still a girl, really. Younger... much, much younger than you are now. It was Spring, and my village was having a festival. Every girl in town wanted to be asked to dance by a young man... Andrew Lewnawitski. Był bardzo przystojny.⁶⁸I thought I would most certainly get asked to dance by Andrew. We used to run into each other quite frequently, you see. And every time we did, I would look into his big, blue eyes and I would imagine begin in his big, strong arms. I would imagine buying a house with him, and having many, many children with him. And from the looks he gave back to me, I thought he was imagining the same. So, you can see, I wasn't just hoping to dance with him. I thought I was meant to. Like it was... what's the word in English? Przeznaczenie?⁶⁹

⁶⁴ "Lucas! Lucas! I need to speak to you right now!"

⁶⁵ "No more time by yourself, hiding away from the eyes of God."

⁶⁶ "Your daughter dies performing her God-given purpose. There is no shame in that. She has left many children that will bring pride to the family."

⁶⁷ "Ungrateful brat! Who do you think you are to talk to me in that way?"

⁶⁸ "He was very handsome."

⁶⁹ "Destiny?"

LUCAS: Destiny Nana.

G.M.: Yes. I thought we were going to get married, and be happy, and live youthfully and freely for the rest of our lives. So, the night of the village dance came, my mother and I spent weeks making a new dress for me. My friends and I all got together... one girl even snuck some beer out of her parents' kitchen. When we got to the fair, everything was colored lights and intoxicating music. I looked for Andrew and eventually I found him; he was by the town square, just hidden in an alley, groping Ilse Fischer, the mayor's daughter. I stood there, numb. Not moving. It took what seemed like hours to realize he was wearing a Nazi uniform.

LUCAS: I do hope there is a point to all of this Nana.

G.M.: The point, boy, is that I was in love with Andrew Lewnawitski. But it was a perversion of love... disgusting. And soon I started to think about him less and less, until one day, I realized I had forgotten him entirely.

LUCAS: I thought you were going to tell me how you met grandfather.

G.M.: I don't remember. That's the point, boy. All I have, in here (gesturing towards her head) are memories that are disgusting to me. When you do what you are supposed to do, what happened yesterday does not matter, because you are not a shameful person. People need to forget, otherwise that shame takes control, and you become a disgusting person.

(During GRANDMOTHER's speech, LUCAS has crossed to the stove, and has picked up one of the pots. Upon hearing the word disgusting, LUCAS hits GRANDMOTHER in the back of the head with the pot he's holding. The contents of the pot splatter against the back wall and across the windows and GRANDMOTHER staggers away.)

LUCAS: DISGUSTING!?!?

G.M.: (Holding her head, staggering.) Lucas!?!?

LUCAS: Nana... I... (Approaching GRANDMOTHER.) I'm sorry. I don't know...

G.M.: (Hitting him violently with her cane.) Należy zginęło w porodzie, ty potworze!⁷⁰

⁷⁰ "You should have died in birth, you monster!"

(Pause.)

LUCAS: Am I disgusting to you? (Hits her with the pan.) Or should I even be asking you that question? (Hits her with the pan.) I am disgusting to you! (He hits her with the pan.) I wasn't born disgusting! (Hits her with the pan.) I (hit) was (hit) made (hit) to (hit) be (hit) disgusting (hit, hit, hit.)!!!

(After the first pan hit in the previous speech, GRANDMOTHER falls to the floor. LUCAS hits her several more times after he is done speaking before stopping and taking in the scene before him. LUCAS drops the pan and exits through the basement door. Lights fade on the kitchen as the rise on the basement.)

(Scene IV: enter Lucas.)

Y.M.: (Reacts through his blindfold, gag and restraints to the noises LUCAS is making.)

(LUCAS crosses to the YOUNG MAN and, for the first time, touches the YOUNG MAN without any gloves on. LUCAS, being covered with GRANDMOTHER's blood, soon leaves some behind on the YOUNG MAN's cheek.)

Y.M.: (Reacts through his blindfold, gag, and restraints to the sensation of blood on his body.)

Lucas: Stop it! Just stop it!

(LUCAS paces for a moment and calms down. Once he has, he realizes that the cause of the YOUNG MAN's freak out is the feeling of blood. LUCAS looks down and realizes that he, himself is covered in blood. LUCAS crosses to the sink, turns on the hot water, and while he waits for it to become hot, undresses slowly, methodically. Once LUCAS is undressed, he places his clothes in a trash bag, and begins to wash himself at the sink.)

LUCAS: (As he is washing himself.) Isn't it funny. You have something you look forward to, you have expectations and hopes of how something will be. And then it seems as if expectations are never the same as what actually happens. I must apologize. Again. I apologize for having to keep apologizing. But this...this is not how I wanted this to be.

(Once LUCAS is finished washing, he puts on a pair of gloves and fills a basin with some hot water.)

LUCAS: I am going to have to shave you. Therefore, I am once again going to

have to remove your gag. You will not scream.

Y.M.: (Emphatically nods his head.)

LUCAS: I wonder if anyone would help you if they did hear you?...I apologize if I seem cynical this afternoon.

(LUCAS removes the gag from the YOUNG MAN's mouth.)

Y.M.: Please let me go.

LUCAS: (Moves as if he is going to cover the YOUNG MAN's mouth and nose again.)

Y.M.: I'm not calling for help, man! I'm not screaming, am I? I'm talking in a normal voice.

LUCAS: I suppose you are keeping your promise to a point.

Y.M.: And...and you gotta respect that. Me keeping my promise. Right? Because you're such a logical guy and stuff.

LUCAS: I am.

Y.M.: That's what you wanted me to know about you. Right, man? That you're, like, this insanely...I mean...logical to a fault, or whatever. Right?

LUCAS: (Places the basin of water on a tray and begins taking out instruments to shave the YOUNG MAN with: shaving cream, razor, wash cloth, towel.)

Y.M.: That, and I suppose how lonely you are.

LUCAS: Lonely?

Y.M.: Or something. Right?

LUCAS: LONELY?

Y.M.: Oh my God, man. I'm sorry. Please don't put the gag back in my mouth.

LUCAS: (Regarding the Young Man.) I shant.

(LUCAS places a hot, wet wash rag around the YOUNG MAN's cheeks and jaw line.)

Y.M.: What happened?

LUCAS: (Gives the YOUNG MAN a look. He wasn't expecting actually interest from the YOUNG MAN.) What happened? You mean today?

Y.M.: Just now.

LUCAS: (Removing the wash rag.) That's funny. I'm trying to think of what happened today, and I can't seem to recall. I appreciate you not screaming, by the way. I do have an ever so terrible head ache. I get them, you see. The headaches.

(LUCAS begins to apply shaving cream to the YOUNG MAN's face.)

LUCAS: I don't remember the days, so much as I remember the headaches. And my mind feels unorganized... dirty. I've been telling you about James? I remember this one particularly bad migraine; it was just after James had gotten back from his week away. I usually lunched in the library. They had this reading area, you see, and the period during which I had my lunch Freshman year, there usually wasn't anyone in there fornicating, smoking marijuana cigarettes, or fulfilling any of the other limited leisure time activities my academic counterparts partook in.

(LUCAS begins to shave the YOUNG MAN.)

LUCAS: I went to the reading room because of the solitude... I didn't like the noise and the crowd of the cafeteria. Noise gives me headaches... too much of it. On this particular day, I went to my private reading room, and who do you suppose I saw there?

Y.M.: James?

LUCAS: Clever boy. But it wasn't just James, you see. He was there with this girl named Sabrina Chase. Now, you see, James was a notorious cad. And at the time, he was supposed to have been making a girl named Tina Walters his steady girl. So, you see, Sabrina Chase was most decidedly not Tina Walters. But, I walked into the room, and there the two of them were, pants around their ankles, James' head between Sabrina's legs. She screamed when she saw me.

"What the fuck you looking at faggot?" That's what James always called me. A bit of a pet name, I suppose. Now that I think about it, I wonder if he even knew my real name.

(LUCAS uses the wash rag to wipe away any excess shaving cream on the YOUNG MAN's face.

LUCAS: Well, I obviously didn't know the proper decorum for this type of situation; so I just stood there, mouth agape. He asked the same question, or a variation thereof, and I suppose I snapped a little. All I could focus on was Sabrina Chase yelling something at James... She was so loud, and oddly enough, my ears seemed to stop working... I remember her rushing past me, and then the feeling of the wall against the back of my head. And then grey, cloudy fireworks.

(LUCAS towels the YOUNG MAN's face dry.)

LUCAS: When my vision returned to normal focus, James' face was mere inches from mine. I could see the veins in his neck and forehead popping out. My toes were barely touching the ground, and my head was swimming from his big, strong hand wrapped around my neck. I thought he might kiss me. I don't remember hearing anything he said to me; my ears, I suppose, had not yet regained a normal level of functionality. But he was so warm, and strong and he smelled like humanity, and insides and chlorine. And I became excited.

(LUCAS rubs down the YOUNG MAN's forearms with the wash rag.)

LUCAS: I reached out and caressed his manhood and he once again slammed me against the wall. It was all so terribly exhilarating. His hands getting tighter and tighter around my neck. He was screaming, but all I could see was his lovely lips moving, slowly.

(LUCAS applies shaving cream to the YOUNG MAN's arms.)

LUCAS: I don't know how long I hung there, dangling in James' grip. It couldn't have been too long I suppose. I don't remember losing consciousness; although I suppose if I did, the excuse of being out of control of my actions would make what I did a lot easier for most other people to understand. I remember feeling something heavy in my hand, and then being on the floor as air rushed back into my lungs. James was sprawled out on his back, mere feet from me, holding his head. I stood, and looked down and saw blood coming from a wound, and I remember it taking me a long time... longer than I now think it should have, to realize that I had hit James with my copy of "Ivanhoe."

(LUCAS uses the wash cloth to wipe off any excess shaving cream from the YOUNG MAN's arms.//)

LUCAS: And there he lay. You see, you should be thankful this isn't happening

on the floor. I clean this floor as well as I clean everything in my basement. But I still get scared that what I do never gets the floors completely clean.

(LUCAS towels off the YOUNG MAN's arms.//)

LUCAS: I walked over to James as he was starting to rise to his feet. And I hit him again with my book. He collapsed back on the floor and didn't move. He was so beautiful. Even his blood seemed more handsome than the blood of mere men. I could feel myself becoming more and more excited... in a way that I had always heard my fellow academic menticulators speak of, and in a way that I had not experienced with my brother's prostitute.

(LUCAS pulls the sheet back from the YOUNG MAN's legs and feet. He then begins to use the wash cloth on the YOUNG MAN's legs.//)

LUCAS: Do you suppose it's in any way odd that I kept thinking about her during this whole experience? I did. Everything at that time reminded me of her in a certain way. Everything except for the excitement I was experiencing. But, to claim an excuse for her presence in my thoughts, if there is an excuse to be claimed in this situation, my brother's prostitute is who taught me to do what I did next. I climbed on top of James.

(LUCAS applies shaving cream to the YOUNG MAN's legs and begins to shave them.//)

LUCAS: His body was so firm under his clothes... and I could feel his stomach growing firmer with each little shallow breath he took. He had never fully reapplied his trousers to their proper position after Miss Chase had left, so dispatching those was a simple matter. But I climbed on top of him and took him inside of me and I began to move, in what I thought was the same, or at least a close enough manner to the one in which my brother's prostitute moved on top of me. But much, much more gently than how my father had on top of my mother. I'm a gentleman, so I'll spare you too many of the "blue" details; including how much it hurt that first time James was inside of me.

(LUCAS uses the wash cloth to get rid of any excess shaving cream on the YOUNG MAN's legs.//)

LUCAS: James began to wake up about half way through. At first, he didn't know what was going on... even though all physiological signs indicated that, on some level, he was enjoying what I was doing to him. He was obviously still weak from the blows to the head because

when he tried to fight back, it was feeble. Pathetic. I needed to remind him how to fight back. So I wrapped my fingers around his throat as I rode him. I wrapped my fingers around his neck and I watched his eyes. All that hate, all that rage and confusion. It was so pure and free. So clean. I confess I let myself get swept away in the moment. So much so, that I hadn't realized James had expired.

(LUCAS towels off the YOUNG MAN's legs, and covers them, once again, when he has finished.//)

LUCAS: How was I supposed to know? I had never taken a life before, and at the time I had no idea that it was possible for a body to stay erect, even after death. I became frightfully embarrassed after I had finished. I'm quite certain that part of the reason I felt so embarrassed was at least partially due to how incredibly euphoric the entire experience made me feel. There were no noises. There were no lights or smells. There was just James and I. And then just I. And I did become embarrassed. It was my first time. It hurt. I cried. And I was embarrassed. So much so that I fled the scene and ran home.

(LUCAS raises the sheet covering the YOUNG MAN's private area. He uses the wash cloth and applies shaving cream.//)

LUCAS: The police came to my house. I had forgotten to take my copy of Ivanhoe with me, you see. And the police needed to bring me down to the station for questioning. I sat in a room for hours. I think the total amount of time I spent face to face with a detective did not total more than fifteen minutes. So mostly, I just sat in the interrogation room and was ignored. I disgusted the detective, you see. I could see it in his eyes.

(LUCAS begins to shave the YOUNG MAN's groin.//)

LUCAS: I was given a lawyer. My fingerprints and other...leavings were all over James' body. My public defender got me off with probation, arguing that I acted out of self defense. However, my parents felt as if a more...proactive approach needed to be taken with me. They began to send me to doctors, clergymen. I was shocked, taken out into the woods, forced to endure ice baths. All in the efforts to cure me of my monstrosity.

Y.M.: Come on, man. You don't have to do this.

LUCAS: Oh, but I do you see.

Y.M.: You don't want to do this!

LUCAS: I'm quite certain I do. I find that a cleanly shaven body is so much more...hygenic.

Y.M.: No! You don't want to kill me.

LUCAS: But I do, you see. I'm afraid it is a bit of the pinnacle of this process for me. But I hope you aren't dwelling on the negatives of this situation.

(LUCAS uses the washcloth to get rid of any excess shaving cream around the YOUNG MAN's private area//.)

Y.M.: I'm not James!

LUCAS: I beg your pardon.

Y.M.: You heard me! I'm not James.

LUCAS: (Begins laughing.)

Y.M.: So, you see, you should just let me go. Because I'm not James and all.

(LUCAS begins to towel off the YOUNG MAN's private area.//)

LUCAS: You think I brought you here because I, on some level, think you're, what? Some kind of reincarnation of my first, true lover who I subsequently murdered?

Y.M.: I mean...with the measuring and stuff.

LUCAS: Young man, as you so keenly pointed out earlier, I'm a creature of logic. I'm not insane. There is a very logical reason for all of this. A reason which I have been painstakingly trying to explain to you during the time I have played host to you. Have you not been paying attention? I've been very careful in the amount of medicine I've been giving you. So while you were docile, you should have still been mostly cognizant. And here, I was, really hoping that you were going to be different...significant. What a pity. Now, if you would please, kindly open your mouth. I'm afraid that my murdering my grandmother might have prompted my neighbors to call the authorities, and so, you see, I'm having to move my timeline up significantly.

Y.M.: Oh God. You killed your grandmother?

LUCAS: Unfortunately. I suppose if I had not lost my head, nature would have

taken its course in the next several years or so. But, as I said before, today has been unexpectedly harrowing for me. (More aside than to the Young Man.) And she made it perfectly clear that she was never going to just let me have what's mine... even after death. Now, it's time we truly begin. Don't you think.

(LUCAS begins to gingerly un- tuck the sheet from around the YOUNG MAN.)

Y.M.: (Crying. Desperate. Out of reflex.) Oh God. I'm so sorry mom.

LUCAS: I beg your pardon?

Y.M.: She's going to be so sad. Oh, God I'm sorry I'm going to make her so sad.

LUCAS: Please be quiet.

Y.M.: (Losing control.) She works two jobs. The last time I talked to her, we got into an argument. She was calling me in between her jobs because I hadn't talked to her in a while, and I was trying to blow her off...and all she wanted to do was talk. I'm sorry mom. I'm so, so sorry. And she's not going to-

LUCAS: Stop it! She isn't here! I am! Stop thinking of her! She is not here for you! Nobody is... and nobody will be.

(LUCAS regards the YOUNG MAN for a long moment as the YOUNG MAN sobs hysterically.)

LUCAS: (Aside.) But I was looking right into his eyes. He was free. (To YOUNG MAN.) And so could you have been.

(LUCAS regards the YOUNG MAN who, while still blindfolded is trying to figure out where LUCAS is in the room. After a moment, LUCAS crosses to the YOUNG MAN and begins to undo his restraints.)

Y.M.: What- What are you doing?

LUCAS: Get out.

Y.M.: What?

LUCAS: I'm loosening your restraints with the intention of setting you free. I want you to get out.

Y.M.: Really? You're letting me go? Holy shit man, thank you. I don't have to go to the cops with this. You know. I probably won't. If my frat brothers...

LUCAS: GET OUT!

(Young Man does not move.)

LUCAS: GET OUT, GET OUT, GET OUT!!!!

(YOUNG MAN scrambles out of the chair, and hurries as fast as his weakened limbs will carry him out of the basement, holding the sheet around his body. Once he is gone, LUCAS crosses to the sink and turns on the hot water. He crosses back to his cart, gets the basin, drains the old water, refills it with hot water and crosses back to the chair that used to hold the YOUNG MAN. LUCAS scrubs the chair down methodically, meticulously. Once he is done, he pulls out a towel from under the cart and dries the chair off in the same way. He crosses back to the sink, drains the basin, rinses it out, and leaves it in the sink. He turns off the water, crosses back to the chair, and throws the used towel in the waste bin. He removes his gloves, throws them in the separate waste bin, and puts on a fresh pair. He then pulls out a crisp, clean, white sheet from the shelves under his tray, and spreads it out over the chair that used to hold the Young Man. Lucas sits in the chair, and pulls his tray close to him once he has himself situated. He digs into another one of the drawers under his tray and pulls out a bottle and a clean syringe. He fills the syringe with the contents of the bottle and places both on the tray in front of him. Pause on this image as Lucas sits, and considers the needle in front of him. The lights fade on the basement as a spot comes up on the kitchen. Enter Anna.)

ANNA: Hello? I'm sorry to just come into your home like this...it's just...there was a commotion, and grandmother wanted me to come and see if there was anything...(Seeing Grand Mother lying dead on the floor. She screams.)

(Enter YOUNG MAN, stumbling.)

Y.M.: (His vision has not yet returned to normal after spending several days blindfolded.) Is someone there?

ANNA: Who are you?

Y.M.: Please, you've got to help me. I- I can't really see. I've been blind folded. Oh God, please, call the police! I think he said he killed his grandmother!

ANNA: I think he did.

Y.M.: (Feeling his way across the room.) Oh, God.

ANNA: What did you do?

Y.M.: Me? Nothing! I'm just a college student! He had me in the basement!

ANNA: The basement?

Y.M.: He said it was the basement. I was blindfolded. I came up some stairs. Where are you? You've got to help me!

(The YOUNG MAN continues to feel his way towards the door leading to the rest of the house. ANNA takes in the scene before her. She looks from the basement door, to the direction in which the YOUNG MAN desperately scrambling for freedom. Hold on this image for several beats.)

ANNA: The basement...He has his secrets...

(ANNA begins to approach the YOUNG MAN as the lights fade to black. END.)

