

Insurgent Theatre's first D I Y touring play, running sporadically from July til April 2008-09, Paint the Town is a radical fairy tale and call to action for the creative class.

Brechtian narrators interupt a ruthlessly theoretical family drama about an inspired revolutionary, the perfect family who loves her, and the man who slaughters that family in a brutal wave of terrorist strikes to set her free.

"Satisfying, disturbing and highly entertaining. Its glimpse into a world of terror – devoid of emotion – chills, even when we feel, somehow, a little sympathetic..."

- Burt Wardall, Vital Source Online

"Paint the Town is an utter rarity these days: a radical drama based on cool thought. But don't let it's icy surface fool you, Paint the Town smolders with rage at the horrible joke our world has become. Rex Winsome takes a scalpel to the values our society holds dear, and nobody is left unscathed: not capitalists, humanitarians, or revolutionaries. It's an angry, smug, terrifying play inflected with Brecht, Artaud, and Dogme."

- Jeff Grygny, Drama Critic
Shepherd Express Milwaukee.

**INSURGENT
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When she gets to the wall, she paint's it as high up as she can reach.

Other rollers and buckets are distributed to the audience. The bottom eight feet or so of the entire venue, inside and out, is painted red.

Then the neighboring buildings.

That's the ideal, anyway.

THE END

PAINT THE TOWN

a play for the
DIY theatre circuit
by

Ben Turk

EPILOGUE

RED stands, crosses to Art, crouches and touches the spilled paint. He wipes his face absently, smearing some paint on it.

He sits strangely for a few moments.

He plants a hand firmly in the paint, and reaches into Art's pocket with the other, pulls his cell phone out.

He sets the chair downstage and stands on it, holding the phone up until he gets a signal.

He dials a number from memory.

RED: Mom? Mom, it's... It's Daniel. I've- I need to come home now. Okay? I- I'll call again when I'm closer.

He collapses into the chair, sobbing. Then gets up, drops the cell phone and exits, looking back on Nadia.

NADIA wakes with a start.

NADIA: Red. Red, I- Red?
Red?

She sees the cell phone.

Red!

She gets up, picks up the cell phone, checks the recent calls.

Red.

She hardens visibly.

She crosses to the spilled paint, picks up a paint roller, begins painting the floor.

Paint the Town was written by Ben Turk (under the pseudonym Rex Winsome) and first produced by Insurgent Theatre at The Alchemist Theatre in Milwaukee, WI before an East Coast tour with Peter J Woods in the summer of 2008. Tracy Doyle directed. Jason Hames, Kate Pleuss and Ben Turk were the original cast.

Fall of 2008, the play was work-shopped and revised by the cast with John Kuehne taking Hames' role as Arthur. This edition of the script reflects those revisions.

The author would love to support anyone interested in mounting their own DIY production or adaptation of this play. He's even got a few ideas and updates to include. Please contact Ben through Insurgent Theatre (insurgenttheatre.org) for more information.

Established companies or profit-seeking producers interested in the play should also contact Ben. We might be able to work something out. It'll have more to do with your practices and politics than your ability to pay me. All other productions will be opposed by any means available.

NARRATOR R: As Nadia falls into the deepest most restful sleep of her life, blissful and finally free, she regrets nothing. Her subconscious is rid of the death drive and she dreams of processes, practical repeatable methods by which our political economy will be rearranged. This rearrangement will allow the subjective and objective determination of the will to be reconciled without such desperate destructive actions.

But Red, Red cannot sleep so easily. He soon rises and when he sees the pool of blood and paint, he makes a decision, a decision not unlike Sly Ruendelle's decision to keep the pregnancy that became Mensche. Red decides to sacrifice himself, his chosen identity, his freedom, to allow his Mensche to realize hers.

Nadia Mensche sleeps and when she wakes it will be with an idea in her head, the constructive answer that she will apply and enable all of us to apply, directly and consciously. So, pay attention to what she does when she wakes up. It's important.

The empty space, all the set is loaded in, but not set up. During the initial narration the three actors set the stage, taking turns as the NARRATOR.

The scene is a hand built shack made out of cardboard. A folding table and chair sit down stage right. A few upturned boxes or buckets with utensils are against the upstage wall. A small cot against the stage left wall.

Everything is dirty.

The table is covered with a stack of books and manuals which feature prominently copies of The Blaster's Handbook and The Anarchist Cookbook as well as various hand-stapled or hand-bound books or binders. Underneath the table, there's a crate containing multiple copies of the Koran and other papers. This table faces the audience directly and Red's movements at the table should always be very evident to the audience, as in a cooking show.

A stick of dynamite with coins taped to it sits conspicuously on the table. A few more coins, a box, shiny wrapping paper and the core of a roll of electrical tape sit alongside it.

NARRATOR R: Our story begins in the jungle, the-

NARRATOR A: Storytelling is useless. Winning the audience's hearts and minds with a compelling story will not further the cause of social change. Tragedy, romance and comedy all serve the ruling class.

NARRATOR R: But, our story is *different*. It's full of hardship and dedication, fratricide, sleepwalking, piracy and poverty, but most important, this story is about the revolution, and red paint. Lots of red paint.

NARRATOR A: No. Even tales of revolution, however critical or utopian are only a distraction from your *actual* life. In late stage capitalism, stories consume our desires and exchange them for profit. Hope is a fetter and victory is unimaginable.

NARRATOR N: Now *that* is useless. It all depends on the way a story is told, who tells it to whom and in what context. If the mode of production is removed from-

NARRATOR R: Don't! You'll give it away, you're gonna ruin the story, which begins in-

NARRATOR A: It's not a story, it's a-

NARRATOR R: OUR STORY BEGINS NOW! ...and it begins in the jungle, the deepest, darkest jungle. But by jungle I don't mean:

NARRATOR A: Dr. Livingstone, I presume.

NARRATOR R: or:

NARRATOR N: In the jungle, the quiet jungle, the lion sleeps tonight...

NARRATOR A: Or even Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness jungle.

NARRATOR R: The horror! The horror!

NARRATOR N: We're talking about Upton Sinclair's Jungle. Brecht's jungle. We're talking about:

NADIA *smiles*.

NADIA: Yes.

She cuddles up next to RED. Already half asleep.

NADIA: You're my family now.

Tableau.

RED *sits up, on the edge of the cot, to speak the narration.*

ART: How *could* you?

NADIA: Don't play this game. We did it. I can't give you a lecture on the nature of freedom at gunpoint any more than I could when you asked me a week ago. There's no answer.

ART pulls the trigger!

Click!

There's no bullets! RED took em out last scene.

Click!

NADIA picks up a can of paint. ART drops to his knees.

ART: I'm- Nadia. I'm sorry, I- I didn't realize, I- Nadia? Nadia, I can't- how can I- what can I do to... anything, please Nadia, *anything*, forgive me. Nadia, please. I'll do- Just- please, help me understand!

NADIA hits him in the head with the can of paint. He falls to his hands and knees.

ART: Gah! Ugh... No, Nadia. No.

She hits him again. Straight down on his head. He falls, face first, to the ground. She hits him again, and again. The paint spills.

A spreading pool of red paint pours outward from Art's head.

RED sits on the cot, momentarily transfixed. NADIA stops hitting ART. She gets up, breathing heavy, crosses to the cot.

RED: Can you... will you sleep now?

NARRATOR R: Welcome to the jungle, we've got fun and games we've got-

NARRATOR A: Okay, enough! Dispense of the pop culture references, by now the audience should be adequately situated, and we can begin in earnest.

NARRATOR R: When I say "the jungle" what I mean is the city: the gritty, stinking, filthy, claustrophobic, towers-of-concrete-all-around-me city. That is where our story begins, because that is where our characters reside; where they scratch out their meager existence.

NARRATOR A: Our heroes are not the typical jungle-dwelling types, though. We are not here to tell you about noir-ish detectives, or put-upon office workers. It won't provide some hope of a fairy-tale escape into utopia. Our hero is too smart for that. We are here to describe historical forces and a concrete practical means of altering them. This isn't a story, it's a lesson.

NARRATOR N: Tonight's heroes come from an ancient line of gypsies, rabble rousers, anarchists, artists and troubadours. It's genetic, you see. Every agitator in the world can be traced back to an ancient and increasingly scarce lineage. That is: they *could* be traced back, if not for all the promiscuity, infidelity, and illegitimacy that accompanies the lifestyle... not to mention the raping and wanton murder. Yes, it really is an ugly tradition and perhaps it's for the best that this lineage has been weakened... at least for the genealogist's sake.

NARRATOR A: But, suffice to say, our heroes are getting back to these violent and raucous roots, for better or for worse. Well, for worse. Considering how things will turn out, it's definitely for the worse.

This is a cautionary tale and when you return to your homes at the end of the night it should be with confidence that *you* have made the right decisions in life; decisions completely unlike those made by the characters in this play. As you shuffle off to sleep it will be with the knowledge that at the very least, you will never have to see your own brother's blood on your hands and that your lover, lying beside you- however plain and uninspiring he or she may be, is not a homicidal megalomaniac.

NARRATOR N: Take comfort, my friends, for your life surely bears no resemblance to the lives we will portray for you tonight, and take warning if you find some kindred spirit, some hope for redemption or a spurt of inspiration in what we are here to say. For these are dirty deeds with unpleasant repercussions.

RED: Can we get on with this?

NARRATOR N: Yes Red, sorry. Right away. The introduction of our characters: first, the impatient one, I present: Daniel Bols.

RED: What?

NARRATOR N: He prefers to go by his alias: Big Red. Big Red is the ruthless anti-hero, the absolute embodiment of the permanent revolution, the omelet made by breaking far more eggs than are really necessary.

NARRATOR A: Big Red, as charming as he may seem, is not to be trusted. Which is unfortunate, because he is our main character's, Nadia Mensche's, lover, the homicidal megalomaniac.

RED: What was that?

NARRATOR N: On to our next character. Mensche's ill-fated half-brother: this is Arthur Pratt. Arthur,

RED: However you wanna say it, I have freed you to help you make things happen.

NADIA: Why invest so much in me?

RED: Because of your background. Your real mom and dad.

NADIA: That's bullshit. That "genetic proclivity for inspired violence" is just a game we played, don't pretend it's real or that it justifies-

RED: No, it's your birthright. For whatever reason, not genetically, not by divine right, but still, clearly, you should be... you are- you... should be king.

NADIA: You want a *king*? You want *me* to be king? You, who just said you don't love me, want to be- What is the desire to be ruled by another if it's not love?

RED: Mensche, I...

ART busts in, filthy and exhausted.

ART: Nadia! You- How *could* you?

ART lunges at NADIA. RED intercepts him, they wrestle. ART sees the gun sitting where it was left in scene five. He grabs it, points it at RED who backs off, sits on the bed. ART turns the gun to Nadia, who backs up, against the buckets of paint.

ART: You did it?

NADIA: Yes. We did.

ART: *Why!?!*

NADIA: Arthur.

RED: Art lies to himself everyday.

NADIA: You lied to him in front of me.

RED: And you knew I was lying and you lied right beside me.

NADIA: Red.

RED: You want me to adopt the role of the confessor?

NADIA: No.

RED: So you can forget that you tacitly approved my killing your family in a brutal wave of terrorist attacks? So you can, by forgiving me, adopt the role of-

NADIA: Red! It-

RED: That's what happened.

NADIA: But, haven't we exaggerated the necessity of these acts so we could forget that you did them out of a general blood thirsty-ness, fear of losing me, compensation for your own family's rejection of you and hatred of anyone who loved me because you had to share your love of me with them?

RED: That would make sense, except, I don't love you.

NADIA: Oh yeah?

RED: I *value* you.

NADIA: Why?

RED: The future you are destined to create.

NADIA: Destined? Isn't that one *hell* of a romantic overstatement?

being at best, a side character and representative of the weakening of this genetic line, doesn't really fall into the category of "our heroes" so the warning does not apply to him and you'd actually do well to follow his example, with the exception of his one tragic flaw, that is: the trust and devotion he invests in his half-sister.

NARRATOR R: This brings us to our final character, the true hero of this tale: Miss Nadia Mensche. An enthusiastic idealist, but also one who is always wedding thought with action- even when she's asleep- yes, Nadia Mensche is fully deserving of the title "hero" this evening.

NARRATORS N+A *exit*.

NARRATOR R: Now follow me, little ones, into the jungle of the city, deep below the jungle, in a shack, built in the dark, obsolete section of our city's subway system. Here, under artificial light powered by a lucky tap into some long forgotten power supply for the old trains, here is where our heroes scratch out their existence, fight for our freedom and plot their revolution.

SCENE 1

As the narration ends, the actor playing RED finishes setting up the table and starts the scene by sitting down. He takes a bit of a turnip from his pocket, nibbles it with visible dissatisfaction.

NADIA enters with two grocery bags. RED gets up, pockets the turnip and greets her.

RED: Mensche!

He kisses her hello and helps her with the bags.

RED: What's wrong?

NADIA: Nothing. Another bombing.

RED: Shit. Where?

She hands him a newspaper. He reads with interest.

NADIA: Phoenix.

RED: Phoenix? That's new.

NADIA: They haven't had one yet?

RED: No.

She unpacks the groceries, tossing out anything that is junk food or unhealthy as she goes.

RED: Huh, oh well. More desert... Message from your brother.

NADIA: Hmmm... I didn't do so well here.

RED continues reading.

NADIA: Is it that desperate?

RED: Yes.

NADIA: But, I *am* giddy! I'm distraught and totally sleep deprived.

RED: I can only imagine. Come here, let me-

NADIA: Let me do this my way. Otherwise I'll never sleep. I swear, you do shit on purpose so you can comfort me.

RED: I'm sorry.

NADIA: So you can adopt the role of my soothing balm and forget your own existence within that purpose.

RED: I'm sorry.

NADIA: An apologetic soothing balm.

RED: What else am I supposed to do?

NADIA: Asking *me* to answer that question is not a start.

RED: I want to sleep.

NADIA: Me too.

RED: To make that possible, I have to...

NADIA: You could tell me the truth.

RED: I've never lied to you.

NADIA: You never told me the truth either.

RED: The books are on that table, the alibis are non-existent and the coincidences are absurd.

NADIA: You lied to Arthur.

SCENE 6

RED and NADIA enter, exhausted.

NADIA: Home sweet home!

RED: Mensche.

NADIA: Let me tell you, if I never see a another spin cycle again, it'll be too soon!

RED: Mensche?

NADIA: Yes, dear?

RED: You need to go to sleep.

NADIA: Get my forty winks? Start sawing some logs?

RED: Aren't you tired?

NADIA: Early to bed, early to rise...

RED: Mensche.

NADIA: I am a cliché factory.

RED: I can see that.

NADIA: Yeah.

RED: Mensche, your entire family has just been killed, violently, suddenly.

NADIA: No use crying over spilt milk?

RED: You are in shock and desperately seeking a humorous spin on the situation.

NADIA: When life gives you lemons-

RED: That's enough.

RED: Me neither. Even turnips won't grow properly.

NADIA: What's Arthur want?

RED: I don't know, I didn't read it.

He hands her the envelope.

NADIA: It's open.

RED: I didn't know it was from your brother.

NADIA: It's my name in his handwriting.

RED: What am I? A forensic scientist?

NADIA: Yes, the world's shabbiest. What's this?

She fingers a hole in his shirt.

RED: From the fence. My point is, why would I know Art's handwriting?

NADIA: It's still my name, Red.

RED: I thought it might have been urgent.

NADIA: Shit. This guy *looked* relatively healthy... Is it?

RED: I said: I didn't read it.

NADIA: Then how did you know whether or not it's urgent?

RED: I saw that it's from Art.

NADIA: That doesn't mean it can't be urgent. Maybe my mother died.

RED: Not urgent!

NADIA: What about these, Red?

She holds a package of baked goods.

RED: Those are cupcakes.

NADIA: Muffins.

RED: Same thing.

NADIA: They've got carrots and, looks kinda like...
maybe... bran?

RED: Mensche, dear, we've got carrots growing in the
garden.

NADIA: No we don't.

RED: Well, we *would* if you'd only-

NADIA: I *hate* the garden.

RED: Yes, I know. Your refusal to participate in the
communal gardening responsibilities has not gone
unnoticed.

NADIA: Hey, I provide this commune with more-

RED: That's not-

NADIA: I just prefer a hunter-gatherer mode.

RED: Oh, don't get all Daniel Quinn on me here. This
is about autonomy, not agriculture. The permanent
revolution.

NADIA: The permanent revolution is *all* about
agriculture, Red.

RED: Not Trotsky. Marx. Did you get my tape?

NADIA: Of course.

famous cancer researcher and philanthropist Dr
Stuart Pratt has been identified.

NARRATOR A: Red considers this enough victory for one
night and returns to the shack in the subway with
his dear distraught and totally sleep deprived
Mensche.

The actor playing ART pauses in the doorway and begins the narration.

NARRATOR A: Our heroes hurry to the surface to call Stuart, then make their way to the wake, but not without a pause during which Nadia cleans her half-brother's wounds and Red places a covert call with Art's phone; a call to his young unprincipled accomplice, Dynamo.

RED: The opportunity to have the entire Pratt clan in one place at one time is enough to balance out this contribution to the "evil" telecommunications infrastructure.

Dynamo, we need to change the target one more time.

NARRATOR N: When they get to the condo, Red convinces Arthur to go up first and prepare everyone. But as soon as Art's in the elevator Red turns Nadia around, walks her out of the lobby and back towards home. They walk right past an old rusty truck with a new red paint job and a bed stuffed full of chemically treated fertilizer: a truck that Dynamo just parked next to the condo per Red's instructions.

NARRATOR R: A minute later, when Red and Nadia have achieved safe distance, but before Art *should* have come back down to retrieve them, Dynamo detonates the truck bomb and levels half the block.

NARRATOR N: Upon hearing the explosion, Red and Nadia run back to the scene of the crime and watch as emergency crews dig through the rubble and piece together the remains. They keep their distance and when told that only family of the victims are allowed into the hospital, they opt instead for the same laundromat, the same news reports of patriotic wars against fundamentalism. Hours later, they finally hear word that the body of

She tosses him a roll of electrical tape. RED sits down, tapes the remaining coins to the dynamite.

NADIA: What about Gramsci's cultural hegemony theory?

RED: Thank you.

NADIA: You're welcome. Simple autonomy ignores the complex of social institutions that tend to-

RED: Are you saying... *Bernstein*?

NADIA: No, Antonio Gramsci, or Althusser, over-determination.

RED: All you need is Lenin. A vanguard party to lead the-

NADIA: It's too late. Max Horkheimer and-

RED: Faugh! Lukacs.

NADIA: Barthes.

RED: Mao.

NADIA: Lacan.

RED: Stalin.

NADIA: Stalin? Jesus...

RED: *What?*

NADIA: No, not Jesus... McLuhan.

RED: Oh c'mon.

NADIA: Derrida!

RED: Now you're being ridiculous.

NADIA: Well, you're completely redundant. Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Castro...

RED: Alright, Žižek.

NADIA: Finally. Hmm...

RED: See, I'm not redundant, I'm consistent. Because I'm right.

NADIA: No. Where is your garden?

RED: On twelfth and main.

NADIA: Behind a fence. By trespassing on that lot, you are engaging with the system no less than I am by taking off with some poor sap's-

RED: I'm acting outside it, not depending upon it.

NADIA: That's because one cannot depend on something that *provides nothing*. My system is preferred by virtue of its utility. John Stuart Mill.

RED: Oh, fine. But, those cupcakes?

NADIA: Yes.

Contemplates the cupcakes for a moment, throws them out.

RED: Do those cupcakes provide you with such utility?

NADIA: Red-

RED: Will the satisfaction of not having to grow carrots and prepare a good carrot cake-

NADIA: Red.

RED: Enrich your life enough to balance out the toxic crap, exploitation and imperialism that you'll consume if you eat that?

ART: No, it can't. She's right. I don't-

RED: Yes, you're a bastard. That can't be fixed. We can stop your father calling the police.

ART: How?

RED: Go and explain ourselves.

ART: We- he's gonna call the cops. We can't go there, he'll-

RED: You still have that wake tonight?

ART: Yes. It's- now it's more than just a wake, it's- well...

RED: The whole family will be there.

ART: Yes.

NADIA: When did you tell Stuart to wait two hours?

ART looks at his cell phone.

ART: Two hours ago.

He starts dialing.

RED: Upstairs.

RED grabs the phone. They exit.

NADIA: You euthanized your friends?

ART: There was nothing else I could do.

NADIA: Jesus.

ART: You always say I'll never understand you, but, well... this is- all I'm trying to do is what's best for you, can't you-

NADIA: You think dragging me out of here at gunpoint is best for me?

ART: I'm sorry. I know. I-

NADIA: Sorry for what?

ART: I- I'm-

NADIA: How can you apologize if you don't even recognize what you did wrong?

ART: I don't know.

NADIA: Listen, you and your dad, you want me to come back to you, deny my life- You- you want me to reject *my life* in order to *legitimize* yours. I'm not going to play Patti Hearst for you.

ART: That's not-

NADIA: Yes it is. Honestly, Arthur, can you tell me you didn't fantasize about me, coming to you and your dad crying and telling lies about being brainwashed?

ART: I...

NADIA: You want me to beg and be cleansed in your forgiveness, re-virginized.

RED: This can be fixed, Art.

NADIA: Red, I already threw them out!

RED: Okay.

She reads the message.

NADIA: You're thorough today.

RED: Someone has to be.

NADIA: It's an invitation.

RED: See, why would Art send anything urgent.

NADIA: Why would anyone send anything urgent?

RED: Dynamo might.

NADIA: Why would Dyna write to *me*?

RED: Why does Dynamo do anything she does?

NADIA: I... see your point.

RED: What's the problem, anyway?

NADIA: It's not a problem, just-

RED has run out of coins.

RED: Hrm. you got any change?

NADIA: Change? Like, money?

RED: Oh. Yeah.

NADIA: I'm just curious why you found it necessary to open my mail.

RED: You seen any piggy banks laying around? Fine. Why do you find it necessary that I *don't* open your mail? Is your brother conspiring against me?

NADIA: It's an *invitation!*

RED: I *know*. Tell him next time he'd do better to put his name on the *outside*. I'll lose interest before I open it.

NADIA: He's not-

RED: His secret messages would get by unabused.

NADIA: Red, I'm-

RED: Shit! I might have to panhandle.

NADIA: You still haven't justified opening my mail.

RED: and I don't *have* to.

NADIA: If I have to justify eating carrot bran muffins-

RED: Cupcakes.

NADIA: Then you have to justify opening my mail.

RED: Okay... I thought it might be from your secret lover.

NADIA: What use do I have for a secret lover?

RED: Excitement. Variety.

NADIA: I can't imagine anyone more exciting.

RED: Romantic overstatement?

NADIA: Perhaps. Who is this exciting secret lover?

RED: Cesár, the latin tiger. The one who steals you from my bed at night.

NADIA: Don't. Don't joke about that.

RED: He can't help having thoughts. Everything else follows naturally.

NADIA: Ignorance isn't an excuse.

ART: I asked you to explain! You said I'd never understand.

NADIA: Shut up.

ART: No, Nadia. What do you want?

NADIA: I want you to not have come here. I want you to not have uttered a word of your crazy fucking suspicions, I want you to not be fucking stupid.

RED: Reverse causality gets you no where.

ART: I'm sorry, okay? I'm fucking sorry.

NADIA: I don't give a shit.

ART: Please Nadia! I can't- I'm just trying to... Why are you doing this to me?

NADIA: You come here, threaten me-

ART: You- I just spent six hours trying to help my best friends die. How can you be- why can't you understand that?

NADIA: I don't...

RED: Art, how *could* she? You can't expect anyone to understand that.

ART: But- but then... you can?

RED: No, I don't. I've only taking into account that your judgment is even more fucked than usual. When did you talk to-

where this is, and- I wasn't gonna... If I don't come back in two hours he'll call.

RED: Two hours from when?

ART: I had to- I didn't let him call because... I-

NADIA: Because you wanted to "bring us to justice" yourself. Look, he's playing the hero.

ART: No.

NADIA: Then, why?

RED: So he could save *you*. The cops will take us both.

NADIA: Fine. That's still playing the hero. Even worse, *my* noble protector. I don't need you Art.

ART: Would you prefer that I'd let dad call? That I'd brought half the precinct down here with me? My *Empire*?

NADIA: No.

ART: What then? That I'd died?

RED: Art.

ART: Well, Jesus! *Someone* tried to kill me, and then I come here and-

NADIA: Come here with a fucking gun.

RED: Mensch, have a little sympathy.

NADIA: He was going to kill you!

RED: Not without reason.

NADIA: Reason? Because he thought you- that's not reason that's a baseless accusation.

RED: What? Cesár?

NADIA: No. The other thing.

RED: Your somnambulism?

NADIA: I don't want to talk about it.

RED: Okay, changing the subject... we've got bombs in Phoenix, bran muffins, the garden, latin tigers, Art.

NADIA: Arthur or art-art?

RED: Oh, fuck art!

NADIA: Yes! Art-art! Barking art. Art! Art! Art! The lecture!

RED: Barthelme's Art History Lecture?

NADIA: Art! Art! Art!

RED: So, you got cher *Mo-net* and *Ma-net*, that's a tricky one. *Mo-net*'s the one did all the water lilies n shit, his colors were blues and greens. *Ma-net*'s the one did bareass on the grass n shit, his colors were browns n greens. Then you got cher Kandinsky, a bad mother-

NADIA: Fucking shit. Why did you do that?

RED: All them pick-up-sticks pictures- I'm concerned.

NADIA: You think I'm not? You think I don't get totally fruck out?

RED: I know. I've carried you home freaking-out.

NADIA: Damn it, Red! I get fruck out every time it crosses my mind. Like right now. You asshole.

RED: I'm sorry.

NADIA: God!

RED: I just- I don't want you to wander into a live part of the system-

NADIA: Stop it, stop it, stop it! Fuck you. Are you even listening to me?

RED: Mensche...

NADIA: Don't. I swear to god-

RED: What can I...?

NADIA: You do this just so you can comfort me.

RED: That's bullshit.

NADIA: You do it on purpose! You can't just leave it alone, you find this *one* fucked up thing- this fucking *suicidal shit* that I can't even-

RED: Listen, we don't *have* to live this way, we-

NADIA: No. I'm not going to let this ruin-

RED: If she's causing-

NADIA: She's- I won't. I won't let *Sylvia* affect my choices.

RED: But she *is*-

NADIA: Don't fucking say it!

RED: Even subconsciously-

NADIA: Red, *don't!* You *can't* talk about this.

RED: On whose authority?

She hits him again.

ART: Na- Nadia...

She covers his mouth.

RED: Mensche!

RED attempts to restrain Nadia. She elbows him in the guts.

RED: This isn't- Nrg! He's *consistent*, you can't expect... fuck... What did Stuart do?

NADIA: I don't give a shit.

She hits ART again. RED restrains her more successfully.

RED: I do. Art?

ART: Bwah! Ha-boo-hoo-hoo!

RED: Let him get up.

NADIA: Jesus fucking christ.

NADIA stands.

NADIA: Fuck you.

She kicks a can of paint. RED crouches by ART.

RED: Art, what did your dad say?

ART: Ugh... hu- he- He was- he tried calling them- the cops.

RED: But, he didn't?

ART: I wouldn't let him. I- we fought. I made him wait. I told him I was the only one who knows

ART: Nadia! The- arg... the bombing and then-

NADIA: Yes, it's a coincidence, a crazy fucking coincidence, but we're not trying to kill you, and we *didn't* kill those people.

ART: Rrrmmm... Who did?

RED: We don't know.

NADIA: Did you call the cops?

ART: I- I... God, stop, please? I told dad.

RED: Shit.

NADIA: Told him what?

ART: I told him... I told him. Nadia, I didn't know what to do. Ah!

NADIA: Told him *what*?

ART: Do you know what sarin gas does to the human body?

NADIA: Arthur-

ART: You see a roomful of your friends, people who you've devoted your life to saving, die, vomit their... out on the floor you watch that happen and then come and tell me- and then try to be- I told him what I was thinking.

NADIA: You *fuck*.

She hits him.

ART: Gah! No...

RED: Mensche.

NADIA: Stupid fucking *shit*.

NADIA: What?

RED: Yours or *Sylvia's*?

NADIA: Fuck you. Don't. I can't do this here.

RED: Then-

NADIA: I can't! I can't!!!

RED: Find someone, somewhere that you *can* talk about it with!

NADIA: No one else-

RED: You have to do *something*, Mensche.

NADIA: No more. Stop. Let me go, get-

The actor playing Red snaps out of character and addresses the audience.

NARRATOR R: This goes on for a while, hours actually, until finally Nadia exhausts herself and collapses into sleep, leaving Red to contemplate his inability to exorcize the deadly influences of capitalism and family on his precious Mensch.

NARRATOR N: Somnambulism or sleepwalking, is a very troubling thing for Nadia. It's generally not dangerous, unless, like our heroes, you happen to live just off the beaten path, and by the beaten path, I mean live subway tracks with trains barreling down them.

NARRATOR A: Waking a sleepwalker is usually a bad idea. They tend to become startled and disoriented, and may fall or flail out and hurt themselves, or others. The thing to do with somnambulists is to lead them back to bed without waking them. Unfortunately, this option is not available to Big Red. When he wakes to discover an empty space next to him, he's thrown into a panic and darts out onto the subway tracks, without pausing to collect his wits or a flashlight.

NARRATOR N: He casts headlong into the pitch dark of the tunnels, shouting and hoping to find Nadia before a speeding train does. Eventually, her stumbling meandering body and his screaming hurtling one meet. The lovers collide, headfirst, eyes wide but seeing nothing, in the dark.

NARRATOR R: This is the rudest possible awakening into the most discomforting circumstances for poor Nadia. She's thrown into a fit of terror, a tantrum of disorientation and confusion which she hates thinking of, even days later, after Big Red has carried her home, attempting with mixed success to retrace his steps in the dark, and tucked her warmly in to bed.

RED: Did he call the police?

ART: What?

RED: Did you call the police?

NADIA: Or was your plan to just exterminate us vigilante style?

ART: You can't murder a room full of people!

RED: On whose authority? Yours, or The Empire's?

ART: What Empire?

RED: The police. Did you call-

NADIA: We *didn't* murder a room full of people.

ART: Not you, *he* did.

NADIA: Anything he did I did.

ART: No.

NADIA: I am aware of everything he does and I am complicit in it.

ART: That's what you want to believe, but-

RED: Same with you and The Empire.

ART: No!

ART grabs Nadia's wrist and tries to drag her out of the room.

NADIA: You ignorant shit.

She wrestles with him, quickly pins him to the ground, twisting his arm.

SCENE 5

The actor playing Art takes a gun from his belt or pocket and sits in the chair facing the door as he finishes the narration.

ART holds the gun, nodding off, and watching the door. NADIA and RED are heard on the other side. ART wakes up points the gun at the door.

RED and NADIA enter. NADIA sees Art and immediately pushes RED behind her, shielding his body with hers.

RED: I am just full of disgust.

ART: Get away from her!

NADIA: Arthur...

ART: GET AWAY FROM HER.

RED: Who do you think you're going to shoot, Art?

ART: Goddamn it, Biggy, get away.

NADIA crosses to Art.

RED: What do you want us to do?

ART: Put your- get...

NADIA takes the gun from Art.

NADIA: He didn't kill those people, Arthur. He didn't.

ART: Nadia, you don't know that!

NADIA hands the gun off. RED unloads the bullets, sets it on the counter.

NADIA: What the fuck did you come here to do?

NARRATOR A: Nadia's sleepwalking is even more troublesome because of its psychological source. What she recalls of the dreams accompanying her wanderings indicate a subconscious discontent with her current living arrangement. The sleepwalking started a short while after she and Red moved here, and Red believes it results from a secret desire to escape her commitment to these life choices.

NARRATOR N: At first, he thought she was faking it, that this wasn't somnambulism at all, but an intentional attempt to sabotage the life she only *pretends* to want to live with him. But now, he trusts her. Now, he blames her family.

RED: They re-impose bourgeois mythology on her. When conscious she completely negates these contradictory instincts, but when sleeping, nightmares of her loving, well-adjusted family tap directly into the thanatos drive, which compels humanity to self-destruction.

NARRATOR A: And that brings us back to our story. For tonight, after Big Red has returned to bed, carefully snuggling in beside his lover and confident that the previous exertions have rendered her solidly, fastly asleep and safe from her nocturnal expeditions, Nadia proves his confidence misplaced.

The actors playing NADIA and RED get back into the cot. The actor playing ART exits.

NADIA stands and slowly crosses to a cabinet on the other side of the room, where she retrieves a long knife. She carries this knife, vacantly, with a glazed stare, back to the cot. As she approaches the cot, knife raised, she suddenly wakes, dropping the knife on the floor. This sound stirs Red who feels for NADIA then jumps, bolt upright in bed.

RED: Mensche!

He throws himself out of bed, leaping halfway to the door.

NADIA: Red, I'm here. I'm here!

RED turns mid-motion, loses his balance and falls. NADIA runs to him, takes him in her arms. Sobbing.

RED: We have to do something about this.

NADIA: Don't talk.

RED: We have to-

NADIA: Later.

They return to bed, the actor playing ART re-enters.

NARRATOR A: It seems Nadia's suicidal subconscious has identified Red as the obstacle to it's success, an unpleasant development, to say the least. For tonight, our heroes put it aside and settle into sleep without further discussion. The next day, they'll each do something about it, in their own way.

Nadia gets up early, leaving Big Red a sign so he'll know she's not wandering aimless through tunnels again and goes to find someone, somewhere that she can talk to about this terrifying experience. She has no one to turn to but her brother, Arthur. For, he is the only other character in our story.

NADIA gets up, leaves an object, as a sign, in bed next to RED and exits, with the narrator.

RED wakes, looks at the sign, stretches, and stands up. He becomes the narrator.

bodies and out the doors. The Pratt doctors weren't allowed to provide any assistance, or farewell to many of their friends and patients as they suffocated in a series of convulsive spasms.

NARRATOR R: Yes, it wasn't until Stuart and Arthur Pratt had been treated themselves for limited exposure to sarin that they were finally free. Well, free to spend the rest of the night and some of the next day treating people who inhaled the smallest quantities of gas and attempting to identify the dead.

NARRATOR A: Meanwhile our heroes waited by the payphone in the laundromat to hear back from Arthur while the televisions drummed up support for another unrelated war on another impoverished and unstable nation, with coincidentally useful natural resources.

RED: The fall of an empire requires a simultaneous over-extended foreign policy and domestic instability. Homegrown terrorists can easily achieve both goals by including a few simple red herrings in their strikes- a dropped Koran here, a doctored video there. The government is only too eager for a pretext to start one of their self-destructive wars.

NARRATOR A: It's not until the next afternoon that our heroes hear that the Pratt doctors have miraculously survived. Red and Nadia give up waiting for Arthur's call and come home, full of disgust.

The actors playing Nadia and Red exit.

with confidence away from the hell he'd just set loose.

NARRATOR A: The banquet was arranged to honor Stuart and Arthur's contribution to cancer research. They hadn't discovered the cure, but a new technique and new drugs to reduce the pain and difficulties.

RED: They weren't solving anything, just adapting human beings to live with cancer. At what point do we stop being human and start being a set of patent-pending chemical accommodations for a world which we are steadily making uninhabitable?

NARRATOR N: The banquet was attended by The Friends of Stuart and Arthur Pratt; cancer patients and donors to the doctors' foundation. These respected members of the community are the ones who took a Sarin shower when Red's bombs went off.

NARRATOR A: But, Big Red failed again. This time he underestimated the security detail that had been dispatched to the Pratt family following the first attempt. These efficient and dedicated body guards had Stuart and Arthur pulled to a safe corner of the room within seconds of the explosion. They held the doctors in this corner as hundreds of people, many of whom were their closest friends ran around the room screaming in panic at the fires, the alarms and the cold quickly evaporating liquid pouring from the sprinkler system. The well-equipped body guards provided gas masks and cover as soon as the first people began drooling and trembling, a first reaction to the sarin. They restrained Stuart and Arthur when the victims lost control of their bodily functions completely, vomiting, urinating and defecating in their clothes. These doctors, pinned down by their own protectors could do nothing but watch as some victims threw themselves into the fires in an attempt to escape the gas. Finally, the fires were subdued and these bodyguards carried Stuart and Arthur across the floor of twitching comatose

NARRATOR R: But, Big Red... Big Red has different plans, an entirely different, much more radical solution to this problem, because, like any good communist, Big Red solves problems by directly attacking their root causes.

The actor playing Red exits.

SCENE 2

NADIA and ART enter, carrying armloads of buckets of paint. All red paint. Some is spilled on the sides of the buckets, and on Nadia's hands. They are out of breath and laughing.

ART: I can't believe I let you talk me into these things, Nadia.

NADIA: Well, you're still Sly's son. Help bring in the rest.

ART: Mom's name is Sylvia, and I can't.

NADIA: What? Why not?

ART: There's- I just can't.

NADIA: C'mon, you've made it this far.

ART: Now that we're safe, away from the truck, I don't think I can go near it again. I'm terrified the cops are out there and they'll catch us red handed as soon as we touch it... Literally.

NADIA: Yes. Literally.

ART: Besides, I do have to get going, father will be wondering.

NADIA: Ah, Arthur. You're also your father's son.

ART: You say that so hatefully.

NADIA: No I don't.

ART: Well, it's a hateful thing to say.

NADIA: We're not going to talk about that now. We had enough heavy discussion over breakfast. Red should

The actor playing Nadia re-enters, begins the narration.

NARRATOR N: Nadia Mensche and Big Red rush to the hospital where they are promptly turned away by security who isn't allowing anyone near the overflowing emergency room. They spend hours waiting in the Laundromat. They go against their principles to call Arthur and Stuart from a payphone and watch coverage of the attack on ceiling mounted televisions. The reporters, full of big story energy make up all the favorite speculations, stories designed to engender fear of vast fundamentalist networks and hope for our side in the war on terror

NARRATOR A: A few notes on sarin gas: sarin is a fluorinated organophosphorous compound that someone with the right chemistry skills and access to the right equipment could easily manufacture and load into a pressurized container. In its condensed form sarin is a liquid, but if exposed to air it quickly evaporates and is capable of rapidly infiltrating the human respiratory system. It is most effective as a weapon if released in an aerosol form in a confined space.

NARRATOR R: For example, if one redirects the sprinkler system of an auditorium to his pressurized container of liquid sarin and then sets off some well placed phosphorus grenades, placed in garbage cans near the exits for example, perhaps one could, with a single detonation, block the exit and release the toxin onto the crowd simultaneously.

NARRATOR N: This plan should have been fool proof. The imaginative approach, the unexpected target, and the excessive brutality all made the set up easy. Once Red had visual confirmation of Stuart and Arthur on the platform politely and modestly listening to the emcee's introduction, he set the remote timer for his packages and walked casually,

They shake hands and RED sits at the desk. He looks anxiously at the door, then sits, casually at his desk. NADIA returns and begins dressing quickly.

RED: What's going on?

NADIA: There was another attempt.

RED: Attempt?

NADIA: On the TV, at the laundromat. My father- We've gotta go.

RED: Was it-

NADIA: We've gotta go.

RED: Mensche, are they-

NADIA: I don't know. Come on, hospital.

RED: Tell me what happened.

NADIA: The auditorium, gas. Arthur didn't answer.

They exit.

be here soon, he'll help me bring the rest in. What fantastic luck!

ART: To find a truck stocked full up of red paint?

NADIA: Idling, with the keys in the ignition. How could we resist?

ART: Well, *I* could've.

NADIA: Well, yeah, but you're banal and cowardly.

ART: Yeah. Well... What are you and Biggy gonna do with all this?

NADIA: We'll think of something.

ART: Hey, you *could*... paint the town red! Hey?

NADIA: Art, that's not funny.

ART: Funny is in the eye of the beholder.

NADIA: No. Funny is an absolute value. One which you lack.

ART: To each his own.

NADIA: Alright, cliché factory, time to go.

ART: What? This shack not big enough for the two of us?

NADIA: Yes! You've got to get back to work, don't you?

ART: That's true. You know... I have to ask again, one more time, for you to reconsider.

NADIA: And you know I can't.

ART: I was up nights worrying about you *before*.

NADIA: Don't make me wish I hadn't told you.

ART: Don't say that!

NADIA: I can't just leave.

ART: Why not?

NADIA: This lifestyle is important to me.

ART: Why?

NADIA: You can't have freedom without responsibility.

ART: Stealing and scraping together everything that
you own-

NADIA: No! Owing *nothing*.

ART: Everything you use then. *That's* living
responsibly?

NADIA: Yes. We are being-in-itself, completely
independent from The Empire.

ART: Oh, yeah. *The Empire*.

NADIA: Yes. The Empire.

ART: We're beating a dead horse.

NADIA: That's not my fault, cliché factory. You
brought it up.

ART: Because I *don't understand*.

NADIA: Well, you aren't going to.

ART: I'm not stupid, Nadia. Stupid people can't make
it through med school.

NADIA: I'm not saying that you're stupid. I'm saying
that talking to you about this... it's like if you

RED: Got you out of bed didn't I?

NADIA: Hurgh... What time is it?

RED: Time?

NADIA: Roughly.

RED: Early nightish.

NADIA: Then he's probably done.

RED: Where you going? Painting?

NADIA: Laundromat, gonna call Arthur.

RED: You- you going out like that?

NADIA: What? You don't like my dirty whites?

RED: Well... You've got the bells on.

NADIA: Oh.

NADIA takes off the bell, tosses it to RED, exits wearing pajamas. RED waits a few seconds in agitation. Then exits upstage opposite the door and returns with two large bags of fertilizer, which he drags downstage to the audience. He addresses an audience member.

RED: Dynamo? Here, these're ready. There are two
more.

He drags the bags to "Dynamo" they repeat the action with two more bags.

RED: You can get them to the truck from here? This
time the target is your choice, my project should
be finished. Give me twenty-four hours, comrade.

RED: Mensche.

NADIA: Art art art! You gotcher Joseph Beuys.

RED: Jospheh Beuys was a romantic idealist.

NADIA: He sez all society is a sculpture-

RED: He fancied himself some kind of a modern shaman.
That's hippie shit.

NADIA: If society is a sculpture, then a
revolutionary *has to* be an artist.

RED: Joseph Beuys was nothing but a failed Luftwaffe
fighter pilot who got hit on the head too hard
when his plane went down.

NADIA: I'll hit you on the head too hard.

RED: You gotta get out of bed first. Art or
revolution, you aren't getting *anything* done in
there.

NADIA: Fine.

*She gets up, charges him, the tether trips her,
he sneaks up and hits her, they play fight, him
staying just out of her reach. She unties the
tether.*

RED: See, exercise. Makes you feel better doesn't it?

NADIA: *This* makes me feel better.

RED: Ow! Ow! Ow! Okay, okay. We're done.

NADIA: What? I just got loose and now- hey! Hey,
that's cheating. Ow!

RED: Okay, we're finished?

NADIA: Jerk.

tried to explain... cell receptor signaling
technologies to me in Japanese. We just end up
screaming gibberish at each other.

ART: But, I don't know Japanese.

NADIA: Exactly.

ART: I'm not saying you have to get a job, Nadia.
Living without a square job-

NADIA: Not just a square job. *Any* job. Anything that
requires monetary transaction or labor exchange.

ART: That can't really mean you *have* to live down in
the subway system.

NADIA: Yes. No.

ART: With you sleepwalking?

NADIA: Red and I might find something else.

ART: Might?

NADIA: Will.

ART: But, in the- you *know* you won't- why can't
you... Mom and dad would put you up. You could
live free and-

NADIA: Living on your father's money is the total
opposite of living free.

ART: What is *so terrible* about my father?

NADIA: I told you, we're not going to have that
conversation.

ART: When did he ever do anything but support and
nurture you?

NADIA: Arthur!

ART: You- you weren't even born when-

NADIA: Fuck you! Don't try and put me in the role of the childish ingrate. Stop trying to force me to talk about something you will not and *can not* understand.

ART: I can- I... You're right. I can't understand.

NADIA: Then end it.

ART: But, I-

NADIA: It's futile, okay?

ART: Can we talk about why you hate my father's money so much, then?

NADIA: That's a matter of principle, it's reasoned, not felt. Hate doesn't enter into it.

ART: You sure don't *like* it.

NADIA: You, your father, our mother, everyone in the world is totally dependent on that stuff.

ART: Except you and Biggy.

NADIA: Yes.

ART: Doesn't that just make you dependent on him?

NADIA: Arthur.

ART: Well, doesn't it? Instead of my father controlling you, that- you've got your boyfriend-

NADIA: If there's a man in my life that *must* mean I'm *dependent* on him?

RED: The whole scene. My favorite.

NADIA: Well, that puts him on *my* side. Jean Genet.

RED: You crafty bitch! Ionesco.

NADIA: Bertolt Brecht.

RED: Fucking Germans don't mean anything they say.

NADIA: Mayakovsky.

RED: Formalists. Faugh!

NADIA: C'mon.

RED: Baudrillard.

NADIA: Joseph Beuys.

RED: Another German!

NADIA: Hey, I'm German!

RED: You were born in Germany to a Frenchwoman and an American.

NADIA: By a German. Who raised me.

RED: Raised you wrong.

NADIA: I know.

RED: Have you seen him since-

NADIA: No. Joseph Beuys.

RED: Have you even seen Art?

NADIA: We aren't going to talk about that, we're going to talk about art.

RED: Because, Nadia Mensche is a revolutionary.

NADIA: Why's the revolution always gotta be destructive?

RED: Destruction is creative too. You must destroy to build. Blixa Bargeld n shit.

NADIA: What the fuck are you building?

RED: I'm still...

NADIA: You're never gonna build anything.

RED: What, you want me to get a smock and some pastels? Memorize some Shakespeare?

NADIA: Yes. No. Real art, not bourgeois therapy or status symbols. Our art, corrosive unacceptability, Theodor Adorno!

RED: Ugh! Adolf Loos.

NADIA: Walter Benjamin.

RED: Let's get out of Frankfurt, okay? Umm... Genet.

NADIA: What? Jean Genet was one of the most political-

RED: As expressed by *Roger* in *The Balcony*.

NADIA: What?

RED: Scene 5, the revolutionaries are in the café talking about using Chantal as a symbol of the revolution.

NADIA: I don't remember that.

RED: You must have read the revised edition.

NADIA: He revised that out?

ART: Nadia, it's- There's nothing wrong with depending on someone. I mean, everyone has to eat. You need a dependable source of your basic needs.

NADIA: And I've got that.

ART: Through your controlling, dangerous, insane boyfriend.

NADIA: No.

ART: Yes.

NADIA: No! If anything *he* depends on *me*. Anyway, I'd rather count on one person who I know and trust than the whole bloodthirsty apparatus you ignorantly pay into-

ART: Even if it's-

NADIA: An apparatus designed to deny millions of people *their* basic human needs in order to force them into your service.

ART: Nadia! He's seriously jeopardizing your-

NADIA: It's a matter of principle.

ART: I don't give a damn about your principles, he's endangering your life!

NADIA: Not on purpose.

ART: What does that matter? Nadia, you- it's not good. He's a-

NADIA: You don't even... Listen, he's willing to leave.

ART: He is?

NADIA: Yes. For me, because of this- at first he wasn't... he thought I was trying to ruin... Now, he knows and he's willing to give this up.

ART: Then why don't you?

NADIA: Because he doesn't want to. He's willing, but it's a sacrifice.

ART: Yeah, and?

NADIA: And sacrifice is slave morality. Philosophically, it's... offensive.

ART: But, he's willing to do it.

NADIA: Yes. His willingness is a sign of weakness and it shames us both.

ART: Shames?

NADIA: Absolutely.

ART: But... Nadia this doesn't make sense.

NADIA: If someone made you willing to... to give up your job. Just leave all those people to fucking rot-

ART: Nadia!

NADIA: If you knew you would do *that* for someone, if they asked, if you loved them *that* much, you'd be ashamed, wouldn't you?

ART: Okay, yes.

NADIA: Well, that's what self-sacrifice is for us. It's a devaluation. That's why we can't just go suck off Sylvia and Stuart's teat.

ART: But... Nadia, you're going to end up sacrificing yourself instead. You- it's dangerous.

NADIA: It's not lame.

RED: It *is* vandalism.

NADIA: I know you have other...

She gestures at the table, notices that it's clear.

NADIA: Other projects.

RED: It's a statement. They don't-

NADIA: It's not just a statement. It's-

RED: A conquest? A call to action? That's no different than hope.

NADIA: It's *not* a call to action, you asshole. It's creation. An appropriation of property, a product. It begs to be emulated.

RED: How is that not just a statement?

NADIA: Speaking of statements and "calls to action" just what've you been doing to me all morning?

RED: It's not morning.

NADIA: Whatever.

RED: It's not the same. Your red paint idea speaks without speaking *to* anyone.

NADIA: It does make a statement, but it also does more than that. It's a work of art.

RED: Art?

NADIA: Yeah. Art. Rothko n shit. There's nothing wrong with art. It's construction, why can't Nadia Mensche be an artist?

RED: If living in fear and hope is self-negating,
then doing penance for it is self-affirming.

NADIA: A double negative?

RED: A transvaluation of slave morality.

NADIA: Do I really owe for my whole life?

RED: Sure, if this construct works for you, but not
for your mother. For you.

NADIA: My mother died before I-

RED: *Mensche*, Sly chose you, before she met Stuart
Pratt. You were an investment, one that'll surely
pay off, if I can get it out of bed.

NADIA: No.

RED: Start small. Some options: exercises. Jumping
jacks, situps and pushups, ninja pushups-

NADIA: No.

RED: Number two: take a baseball bat to the outdoor
café. Eat pickin's from the ruins while they just
stare. Number three: take a walk and... call Art.
I'm tired of talking to him. Number four: umm...

NADIA: Red, my mother is-

RED: I know, *Mensche*.

NADIA: Leave me alone.

RED: I've left you alone for three goddamn days. No
more. Number four: Paint something red!

NADIA: I know you don't like the paint idea.

RED: She rises to defend her lame vandalism.

NADIA: No. I won't. We'll be alright. We're going to
fix it, okay?

ART: I don't-

NADIA: Trust me.

ART: I-

NADIA: Trust me, Arthur. I'll be alright. Now, go.

ART: We'll see you at Jake's on Friday?

NADIA: Yes. Congratulations.

ART: Will you..?

NADIA: Yes, I'll call you.

ART: Every day?

NADIA: So you know.

ART: Collect?

NADIA: From that laundromat.

ART: Okay. Bye.

Hugs and kisses. ART begins to go.

NADIA: Arthur?

ART: Yeah?

NADIA: Thanks. I couldn't have... talking to you
helped.

ART: Really?

NADIA: Yes. Now, go.

ART: Thanks, bye.

ART exits. NADIA makes herself busy, puts the knife away, arranges the paint buckets. She completely avoids Red's bomb-making table.

RED enters, with a piggy bank and a bag. He sets them on the table. He begins digging through the food stock. Everything is either been sorted as junk food, or requires preparation.

RED: Mensche. You would not believe-

NADIA: Red!

RED: How hard it is just to get a hold of some money.

NADIA: Look!

RED: I'm starving. Spend all day-

NADIA: Paint!

RED: I don't suppose you cooked any of-

NADIA: I said: LOOK!

RED: Mensche. I'm grumpy, please tell me you've got something for me to eat.

NADIA: You limp-dick motherfucker.

RED: Wow. That's a bit harsh.

NADIA: Well, you're the second one trying to feed me bullshit today.

RED: Who's fallout am I catching?

NADIA: My brother's.

RED: Shoulda known.

NADIA: Longer than this.

RED: What does Sly's diary say about hope?

NADIA: Nothing important.

RED: Bullshit. Tell me.

NADIA: Hope is what you do when you're too scared to act-

RED: Exactly.

NADIA: Or too stupid to give up.

RED: So, you're guilty.

NADIA: Yes. I'm stupid and I'm scared and-

RED: And you are doing a disservice to your mother's memory.

NADIA: What?

RED: By mourning Sylvia you are wronging Sly. You have been proven guilty of hoping and you must pay a penalty. Your mother can no longer atone for the last twenty-odd years, but you may still redeem these last few days.

NADIA: It's my responsibility. My mother's twenty-odd years of conformity are the direct result of my existence. They are *my* years.

RED: Well even more you owe. Your first penance-

NADIA: How can you do penance if we don't do hope?

RED: Whatever might get you off that cot, honey.

NADIA: Red. I'm serious.

RED: No. That'd be pretty bad taste, and not very secure.

NADIA: Secure?

RED: For Stuart. He's got a team of bodyguards. It's at your aunt's condo, downtown, tomorrow night.

NADIA: So?

RED: Art asked me to get you out of bed.

NADIA: No. I can't. All those people...

RED: Don't make me disappoint your brother. He holds me in such high regard, I'd rather not jeopardize my position with him. Please, get up-

NADIA: No. My mother is dead.

RED: Mensch, this is bullshit and you know it.

NADIA: My mother, Sly Ruendelle, is dead.

RED: Sly Ruendelle's been dead *decades*. Sylvia Pratt just died. Who the fuck needs her?

NADIA: Red!

RED: Am I wrong?

NADIA: But, she's still my mother.

RED: And that's still an obligatory socially ingrained response, not your genuine feelings.

NADIA: Don't tell me what my genuine feelings are. I wanted- she could've-

RED: When? How long were you going to hope she'd come back?

NADIA: Red, look...

RED: Yes?

NADIA: Paint!

RED: Uh-huh.

NADIA: Red paint.

RED: Red *paint*.

NADIA: There's more of it.

RED: Where's it from?

NADIA: A truck.

RED: That one parked upstairs?

NADIA: Is it big and brown?

RED: Rusty. Used to be white.

NADIA: Full of buckets of paint?

RED: Red paint?

NADIA: That's the one. I stole it. Me and Arthur.

RED has begun tinkering with his bomb. He breaks open the piggy bank and begins taping the coins to what he had built earlier.

RED: Art stole that truck?

NADIA: Well, rode along while I stole it, mostly.

RED: What were you doing with Art?

NADIA: Reassuring him that every car we drove past wasn't an undercover cop, mostly.

RED: Of course. But *before* you found a truck full of paint... Unless- don't tell me this heist was planned in advance?

NADIA: Spontaneous, mostly.

RED: Good, Art's a poor choice for an accomplice.

NADIA: You know it. We got together to discuss somnambulism over breakfast.

RED: Really, and he didn't drag you to the asylum? This the invitation?

NADIA: Nope, my own doing.

RED: Curious decision. What's the invitation then?

NADIA: Another thing. Family dinner at Jake's next week day after their awards banquet. Breakfast was actually fruitful.

RED: That's a surprise.

NADIA: Yes, but I do feel... unburdened. Let's get the paint.

RED: Occupied.

NADIA: Your project?

RED: My... project.

NADIA: Hope it's fruitful.

RED: It will be.

She exits.

RED: More than your breakfast.

RED begins searching his books.

*He sets the plate down by the bed, pulls some vegetables out of his pocket and eats them raw.
NADIA doesn't eat.*

NADIA: I hate the garden.

RED: I know, but look! It's finally got carrots! You should eat Mensche.

NADIA: No.

RED: You can't go without eating.

NADIA: Yes I can.

RED: You *can't*.

NADIA: On whose authority?

RED: Mensche, don't-

NADIA: Don't tell me what I can't do.

RED: I wonder, does table eight count as hunting, or gathering? Nobody even tried to chase me... Maybe you need to work up an appetite. C'mon, breath of fire.

NADIA: My mother is dead.

RED: Mensche.

NADIA: Red.

RED: I talked to Art, the invitation is still on.

NADIA: How? It was for dinner at Jake's, night after the... banquet thing.

RED: The banquet is tonight, and they changed it. Now it's a wake.

NADIA: At *Jake's*?

SCENE 4

The actor playing Nadia ends the narration by lying down on the cot.

All the books and materials on Red's table have been removed or put away.

NADIA sleeps on the cot, with the tether and bell attached. She stirs, slowly, sits up, staring blankly and begins to walk across the room. She is stopped by the tether, turns around, attempts to cross downstage, stopped by the tether again. RED arrives, whistling and carrying a fancy plate with food on it. When he sees Nadia he sets the food down and escorts her calmly back to bed.

RED: Mensche! C'mon... oh, shit. Hey, I've been trying to get you up for three days, but...

She wakes, startled, starts like she's going to freak out for a few seconds, but then recognizes her surroundings and calms down.

RED: It's okay. It's- see? C'mon, back to bed.

She lets Red help her back into bed, and immediately falls back to sleep. After a few moments, Red gets the plate and wakes her again.

RED: Very good. Alright, baby bird, mealtime.

NADIA (*half awake*): Tweet tweet.

RED: Compliments of table eight at your favorite outdoor café.

NADIA: I love table eight.

RED: For myself, something from the garden.

RED: Let's see... paint. Paint- nope. Chemical properties... flammability... What can we do with paint?

NADIA returns.

NADIA: You know, it was fruitful.

RED: Those look heavy.

NADIA: Yup, I gotta get em all before the truck gets found.

RED: You think they'll find it?

NADIA: I don't know, better to not risk it, lotta paint on the line.

RED: You've already got a lot of paint here. It's kind of threatening to take over the living quarters.

NADIA: Yup, and it's all red!

RED: So, what's the plan?

NADIA: I don't know.

She exits. RED goes back to his books.

RED (*as before*): Trucks, trucks... Hmmm car bombs... a truck is just a big car, isn't it?

He finds what he was looking for. Reads.

RED: Big is good.

NADIA returns.

NADIA: Left the rest outside.

RED: In the truck?

NADIA: No. Just right out here. Keeping the living quarters tidy.

RED: I've researched and can't find any productive use of paint, outside of, well... painting.

NADIA: Of course.

RED: What are we-

NADIA: We're not going to talk about that. First, we're going to talk about breakfast.

RED stops working.

RED: Somnambulism?

NADIA: Yup.

RED: What does Art have to say?

NADIA: Clichés mostly.

RED: Amounting to...?

NADIA: He thinks it's this place and wants us to crash at my mother's house until we find something new.

RED: Of course. What do you think?

NADIA: I'm scared.

RED: Yes. What are you gonna do?

NADIA: It's a catch twenty-two. I know how important staying here is to you, and it's important to me too.

RED: But staying risks losing more, and permanently.

NADIA: Um hmmm...

NARRATOR N: They assume no one would target a room full of cancer patients and philanthropists. No one but our Big Red that is.

RED: Philanthropy is a luxury which does not correlate to anything but the privilege that makes it possible. These people cause all the problems, then solve them on the surface, in order to achieve the amelioration of their guilt. They're not actually trying to improve people's lives.

NARRATOR N: The plan: a timed release of homemade sarin gas into the closed auditorium just as Stuart's acceptance speech goes on.

very top of the lush canopy that tops our city's jungle. It was a brightly decorated box, the lid of which was rigged to ignite a stick of dynamite, wrapped up in layers and layers of shrapnel and electrical tape.

NARRATOR N: The intention was to kill both Pratts, but primarily Stuart. Instead, Red got the most unfortunate result of only killing his Mensche's mother, whom Nadia still loved and hoped to reform... or re-corrupt, that is, to her previous glory.

NARRATOR A: Big Red's plan failed on two grounds, ironically these are also the two reasons Red's mission is necessary: Stuart's generous nature and his ability to influence others.

NARRATOR N: When the gift arrived at the table addressed "to: Stuart Pratt" he generously handed it to Sylvia without hesitation, knowing how she loved surprises and the tearing of wrapping paper. When Silvia opened the box, Stuart's influence saved the day! Silvia, being a reformed anarchist, immediately recognized what she had in her hands and how to best contain the damage it would do. Mrs. Pratt plucked the fizzing bomb with a short fuse from the box and neatly folded her body over it so the blast and shrapnel would be relatively contained and additional casualties prevented.

NARRATOR R: Red is a learning creature and he doesn't give up easily. His second attempt will use Stuart's virtues against him, or at least our recognition of those virtues.

NARRATOR A: A few days hence is Stuart and Arthur's awards banquet where father and son are being honored for developments in the field of cancer research. This presents Red with the first opportunity since his failed bombing to get at Stuart out in public with his security detail somewhat relaxed.

RED: Another night of that risk is unacceptable.

NADIA: Not one more night?

RED: No. All day I had visions of trains in tunnels.

NADIA: Me too. I jumped at every bright light and loud noise.

RED: It's irrational to stay like this.

NADIA: But, it's a sacrifice.

RED: No change in my life circumstances is less sacrifice than losing you would be.

NADIA: Well, *that's* a romantic overstatement.

RED: Perhaps, but it doesn't matter. Sacrifice isn't necessary.

NADIA: Why not?

RED: This isn't only a question of moving. We can't stay here *like this*.

NADIA: Aha! You've got a solution?

RED: I've got *solutions*: band-aids and panaceas, silver bullets and stop-gaps.

NADIA: Excellent! What is the plan?

RED: To pursue them all at once, starting tonight, with a band-aid.

He produces a bracelet with a tether and a collar with a bell.

NADIA: Oh! Red, how ingenious!

She puts on the collar, with his help.

RED: This temporary measure will reduce the risk and buy time while I implement my more radical solution. Now, what is the red paint for?

NADIA: I told you I hadn't any ideas yet.

RED goes back to work on the bomb.

RED: Have one now.

NADIA: We'll... paint the town red.

RED: How's that?

NADIA: Paint everything red. Get an army, each with a bucket and a roller and go at it.

RED: Vandalism?

NADIA: On a *grand* scale.

RED: Property damage.

NADIA: A statement.

RED: We're doing *statements*?

NADIA: No. Conquests! Every building we paint we claim as ours.

RED: You can't paint a whole building, not without scaffolding.

NADIA: Just the bottom parts. But thoroughly, everything arm's-reachable. Imagine the visual.

RED places a Koran in the box, then the bomb.

NADIA: Red.

RED: Yes?

authorities and deliver her illegitimate child, he went on to help clear her name, and eventually married her and fathered her second child, named him Arthur and raised them both like any benevolent altruist would.

NARRATOR N: Thus Sly Ruendelle became Sylvia Pratt, but before this transition was complete, Nadia's name was chosen. Her father being a nameless nomad, Sly had to get creative, and in a decision that Sylvia Pratt would regret the rest of her life, Sly Ruendelle named Nadia after all humanity, *Mensche*. This happened somewhere in East Germany.

NARRATOR A: Stuart Pratt soon finished his medical education with flying colors, and emigrated with his new family to America, where he went on to become the most passionate, kindhearted doctor, and then the president of a giant healthcare conglomerate, where he single-handedly pushed through reforms and improvements in every area, from patient's privacy rights to paper work reductions.

NARRATOR R: Yes, Stuart Pratt, unlike the heroes of our tale is a deeply *good* person, a vigilant meliorist who makes our world a more tolerable place through slow reforms, compassionate conservatism, and steadfast dedication to doing good works. He is a model citizen, a man worthy of emulation. Indeed, so worthy of emulation that his son Arthur has devoted his entire life to following in his footsteps.

NARRATOR A: For the first half of Nadia's life she walked we father's path as well, and even now continues to walk it, in her sleep.

NARRATOR R: Of course, this is why Big Red had to deliver a shiny package to Sylvia and Stuart's table as they began celebrating their anniversary with a fine dinner at a fine restaurant at the

The actor playing Red shifts out of character and begins the narration.

NARRATOR R: Now, you may be wondering if Red's methods aren't perhaps a bit too severe, but that's only because you don't understand the severity of this situation. You do know how important Nadia Mensche is, the fact that every step she takes is a step closer to Utopia for all of us.

NARRATOR A: What you *don't* understand is the reason that Red's means are necessary. Once you get the causal link between progress and the extermination of Mensche's family, none of Red's actions can be called into question, which brings us back to our history lesson.

When we left off, the death of the nameless nomad who would've been Nadia's father had left Sly alone, knocked up, totally insolvent and running from country to country. These hard times were the beginning of the end for Sly Ruendelle.

NARRATOR N: Nothing kills a revolutionary impulse like salvation at the hands of a benevolent altruist. This story's benevolent altruist is a naïve young medical student named Stuart Pratt. He was so benevolent that he couldn't bring himself to walk past an obscenely pregnant woman lying face-down in the gutter one drizzly night in the jungle of the city.

NARRATOR A: At first Stuart tried to take the raving woman directly to the hospital for medical attention, but Sly refused to go. He almost called the authorities to come take her to safety, which is the most that could be asked of any good Samaritan, but somehow the desperation and fear in Sly's eyes convinced him to hesitate.

NARRATOR R: To hesitate and then bring her into his dormitory, where not only did he conceal her from

NADIA: Thank you.

RED: For what?

She jingles the bell.

NADIA: For solving problems.

RED: That's just a band aid. Wait until you see my *solution*.

RED crosses to her, kisses her.

The Actor Playing Nadia snaps out of character and begins the narration.

NARRATOR N: And Big Red does have a solution, one that's already half-finished because it involves the tools of his *project*.

NARRATOR A: But, before we tell you anything more about that, it's time for a brief history of the Pratt / Mensche / Ruendelle family line.

NARRATOR R: Nadia is the offspring of two fine and rare specimens of our ancient revolutionary lineage.

NARRATOR A: Such pairings are increasingly rare today because the upstart gene is no longer favored by natural selection. As society becomes more strictly bureaucratized, conformity and docility offer an ever greater competitive advantage.

NARRATOR R: Rebels are stamped out or put down before they can procreate and pass on the upstart genes to future generations.

NARRATOR N: Or... It is possible there *is* no genetic proclivity for radicalism. Maybe such things escape the grasp of bio-determinism, and this whole construct is just a clever thematic device designed to justify our hero's actions and introduce her unique family history.

NARRATOR A: Well, on to that anyway. Nadia Mensche's mother is currently known to the world as Sylvia Pratt. Before this she was known as Sly Ruendelle, and before that she was only known by a band of gypsies who lured her away from the respectable Ruendelle home at the age of six, where she had been known as Miss Sylvie Marie Ruendelle. This all happened somewhere in the south of France.

NARRATOR R: By the time Sly was ten years old she had left the gypsies and was inspiring the general

RED: Home-made frag grenade, in a box, wrapped in shiny paper. Like a gift.

NADIA: Goddamn it.

RED holds NADIA as she begins to cry.

RED: It wasn't your truck. Sit.

NADIA: I know it's not my truck, but I-

RED: Mensche... Sit.

NADIA: What happened?

RED: Sit.

NADIA: Did I see Arthur leaving? Where's my paint truck?

RED: Mensche, that truck has nothing to do with it... Sit. Nadia.

NADIA: You fucking tool, you limp dick-

RED: Sit!

NADIA: NO!

RED: You... your mother.

NADIA: Oh, God.

RED: Mensche, I-

NADIA: How?

RED: Sit?

NADIA: Okay.

RED: At dinner, with Stuart-

NADIA: How?

RED: A- A bomb.

NADIA: What bomb?

strike and city wide revolt in Paris known as the Events of May Sixty-Eight. Yes, this ten year old girl with a barrel of gas and the most incendiary of speeches set those events in motion, and many others all over the world! Until the mid-eighties. Everything ended during the eighties.

NARRATOR N: Except one thing. One noteworthy thing- the thing that our story tonight is all about, got started in the eighties. That thing is Nadia Mensche herself. Nadia got started when Sly hooked up with a nameless vagabond nomad. This was somewhere in the western United States. This nomad was completely mute, he never spoke, not with words anyway. He did speak with actions, fiercely articulate actions, like walking out of the desert and into Sly's arms, or murdering the crook who ran a town outside Sly's commune with his bare hands.

NARRATOR R: This nomad loved with a love that could move mountains and hated with a hate that had him hanged by an angry mob by the time he was twenty-two. But, not before he was able to pass on his genetic information, which was so jam-packed full of radical impulse-

NARRATOR N: If such a thing exists.

NARRATOR R: That, when combined with Sly's own proclivity to inspired violence, would guarantee, according to the laws of Gregor Mendel, their offspring to follow in this tradition.

NARRATOR A: Supposing that radicalism is a complex polygenic phenotype, Nadia may have inherited two complementary sets of traits one from Sly and one from the father. It's possible that Nadia combines these traits to become an ultra-radical individual, one who has the ability to spark a sweeping mass revolutionary movement reconstituting the entire political economy even

within a civilization as sad, lost, and deadly as ours.

NARRATOR R: Yes! It is possible that Nadia Mensche is this ultimate personification of sudden glorious progress, this agitator of agitators, this messiah for our worthless civilization.

NARRATOR N: It is also possible that Nadia is really no different than the rest of us, that we are all equally capable of such things.

NARRATOR A: Anyway, you now understand the potentially unique nature of Nadia Mensche, which brings us to the nurture part of things: Nadia's home environment.

NARRATOR R: The problematic family she grew up with was so nurturing they built chains of love, support and compassion that continue to restrain this wellspring of revolutionary potential.

NARRATOR A: There's much more to say about that, but first, you must know Big Red's solution. We have to deflate the suspense we've built surrounding that subject and allow you all to maintain an unemotional, critical distance from these characters and this story.

NARRATOR N: We have to give away the fact that Red will make three attempts at his radical solution, and even then, it'll be Nadia who delivers the final blow before Red's plan is complete, and, of course, we have to let you know exactly what Red's radical solution is.

NARRATOR R: To break the chains that bind Mensche to traditional values and bourgeois society, Red intends to simply kill the entire family who creates them.

RED: Are you suggesting that Mensche and I wouldn't fuck other people?

ART: Yes. I'm suggesting that this whole open relationship thing is a sham you've worked up, like the rest of your "purpose" and these people- "Cesar?" are fictitious, like "The Empire".

RED: Are these thoughts perhaps a cover for your own unresolved aberrant desires for Mensche?

ART: Aberrant desires? She's my sister!

RED: Maybe your discomfort with her sexuality- with the very idea of her *having* a sexuality, is indicative of-

ART: My mother just died. I didn't come here to get psychoanalyzed by-

RED: What *did* you come here for?

ART: To talk to Nadia!

RED: Well. She's not here.

ART: Yeah, I can see-

RED: So, why are you?

ART: I- Jesus Christ, Red, I didn't-

ART exits, in a huff. RED goes back to work.

RED: "My mother just died." There's always an excuse.

NADIA enters.

NADIA: My truck is gone.

RED gets up, sets the chair near the cot, sits on the cot.

RED: Monogamous?

ART: Yeah, unless... You cheating on her?

RED: No. Cheating implies deception, like monogamy implies exclusivity.

ART: But you're messing around?

RED: Me? No, but I could if I wanted to. So could she.

ART: With who?

RED: I don't know, Cesár.

ART: Cesár?

RED: The latin tiger.

ART: No, you, who would *you*? This Dyna person?

RED: Dynamo is just a kid. Anyone. As long as they aren't diseased or bourgeois or something. Same with Menshe.

ART: And she's sleeping with "Cesár"?

RED: Maybe.

ART: She's not.

RED: Maybe not.

ART: She's not.

RED: Maybe she didn't tell you. Didn't want to poke a hole in your-

ART: Whatever. I'm gonna go. You two can play whatever make-believe games you want to.

SCENE 3

As the narration ends, the actor playing Red sits at the table. He's no longer working on the frag grenade, instead he's dealing with bottles of chemicals, fertilizer and gasoline, and formulas.

ART knocks on the door.

RED: What's the password?

ART: Biggy?

RED (*opening the door*): Art! How've you been, comrade?

ART is harried and has obviously been crying.

ART: Nadia never told me a password.

RED: That's cuz there isn't one.

ART: But, you asked for-

RED: Our security is based on no one knowing where we are. Password isn't going to keep them out.

ART: Then why did you- forget it. Nadia's not here?

RED: Doesn't look like it.

ART: I need to talk to her, it's urgent.

RED: Okay.

ART: She was supposed to call me.

RED: We don't use phones.

ART: She was gonna call collect.

RED: We don't use phones.

ART: But, she said, since it was for me, her calling me collect wouldn't be her using the phone it'd be- I'd be the one using the phone.

RED: Okay.

ART: But, then she didn't call.

RED: Maybe that's because we don't use phones.

ART: But she *said*.

RED: Maybe she was appeasing you.

ART: She said: The satisfaction of calming her poor brother's nerves would enrich her life enough to balance out this tiny insignificant contribution to the evil telecommunications infrastructure.

RED: Then she should have called. She actually use the word "evil?"

ART: I- I don't know.

RED: Or are you imposing your underdeveloped moral jargon onto her statement?

ART: Red. I don't know. Probably. Listen, this is urgent.

RED: Maybe she hasn't got to the pay phone yet. Maybe she called after you left the house.

ART: I have a cell phone.

RED: Of course you do. Does it get a signal down here?

ART (*checks*): No.

ART begins moving around, holding the phone up to try and get a signal.

RED: We can never understand a thing like this.

ART cries for a while and RED holds him. Eventually, he calms down.

RED: Art. You'll be okay? Just, don't-

ART: Yes.

RED: Mensche went to get some groceries, I'm sure she'll be back soon.

ART: *If* she doesn't get caught.

RED: What?

ART: I know how she gets your groceries.

RED: I don't think you do. There is *no* risk of getting caught.

ART: If you say so.

RED: I- I'm sorry Art, but... I've got to point out, a mistake that you made.

ART: What?

RED: When you called me your "half-brother-in-law."

ART: Yeah?

RED: I'm not.

ART: It's a figure of speech. Besides, you and Nadia- it's a *de facto*-

RED: No. Marriage is the first oppressive institution. Your sister and I would never do that to each other.

ART: But, you've been in a committed monogamous relationship since-

RED: I'm not. I can see why you don't trust or understand me and I admire you for maintaining your relationship with Mensche.

ART: How can you forgive so easily?

RED: There's nothing to forgive.

ART: I just- it's a cruel accusation.

RED: Forgiveness implies judgment, I don't do that. The thoughts are in your head unbidden, why judge? If you'd repressed your suspicions of me, that'd be dishonest, and I wouldn't have an opportunity to reassure you. I should be thankful, not judgmental.

ART: Biggy, I just-I can't believe she's gone.

RED: Such a waste, just... senseless.

ART: I know there have been things, her past- but, I know she's a good woman, I *know* she is.

RED comforts him again.

RED: Have... have you considered that possibility? I mean- if it was an assassination attempt, maybe some reactionary from her past- and- and she was the target.

ART: I don't know, but, whoever it was, whichever one of them was supposed to be- If I find the person who did this...

RED: The bastard.

ART: It's just so... sudden.

RED: How can someone be so destructive?

ART: Why?

RED: That's it then. She called while you were down here.

ART: Damn it.

RED: Maybe you should go back to the surface and see if you've got a voicemail.

ART: Biggy-

RED: Maybe you could stay up there until she gets back-

ART: Red, stop. Don't play around with me, please, not today.

RED: Then I can get some fucking work done.

ART catches a signal, while standing on a chair downstage. He missed a call.

ART: Damn it. Must of been her.

He calls the number back.

RED: See? You should've stayed up where your technology fetters function properly.

ART: Hello? Nadia? Oh... no. No, I'm... sorry, I thought- is there a- oh, no... forget it.

He hangs up.

ART: God *damn* it.

RED: Art... what?

ART: Mother is dead.

RED (*aside*): Not urgent.

ART: What?

RED: Mensche will be back soon... I'm- I'm sorry for your loss Arthur.

ART: Bullshit.

RED: You looked like you wanted me to say it.

ART: God, Biggy, you're a real sociopath.

RED: No I'm not. I like you Art, genuinely. And Sly as well.

ART: Her name was *Sylvia*.

RED: Whatever. She's been an inspiration. I will-

ART: How about my father?

RED: What about him?

ART: The bomb that killed my mother-

RED: Bomb?

ART: Yes, bomb. A bombing.

RED: We haven't had one here yet.

ART: Well, now we have.

RED: Yes... Your father?

ART: He was there with her. He's hurt but not bad. It was a small bomb. They think it was an assassination attempt.

RED: If I was going to kill your father-

ART: I'm not *saying* that.

RED: You asked.

ART: Asked what?

RED: What I think of your father-

ART: What does that-

RED: Then you said he was targeted. It's not hard to get your implication.

ART: I'm not implying-

RED: Art, you *just* called me a sociopath.

ART (*suddenly very passionate*): What if I was? What if I *did* suspect you- my half-brother-in-law killed my mother when attempting to kill my father? What's- It's hardly-

RED: You'd be wrong.

ART: It's- I can't-

RED: Come here. Art, it's okay.

He hugs ART, comforts him.

ART: I just don't know what to- I'm sorry Biggy-

RED: Don't be sorry.

ART: But, that's a really- really shitty thing to think about someone.

RED: But, I understand. My life choices- I can be misinterpreted.

ART: You're so strange.

RED: Living with purpose must be strange to you.

ART: Don't condescend to-

When she gets to the wall, she paint's it as high up as she can reach.

Other rollers and buckets are distributed to the audience. The bottom eight feet or so of the entire venue, inside and out, is painted red.

Then the neighboring buildings.

That's the ideal, anyway.

THE END

PAINT THE TOWN

a play for the
DIY theatre circuit
by

Ben Turk

EPILOGUE

RED stands, crosses to Art, crouches and touches the spilled paint. He wipes his face absently, smearing some paint on it.

He sits strangely for a few moments.

He plants a hand firmly in the paint, and reaches into Art's pocket with the other, pulls his cell phone out.

He sets the chair downstage and stands on it, holding the phone up until he gets a signal.

He dials a number from memory.

RED: Mom? Mom, it's... It's Daniel. I've- I need to come home now. Okay? I- I'll call again when I'm closer.

He collapses into the chair, sobbing. Then gets up, drops the cell phone and exits, looking back on Nadia.

NADIA wakes with a start.

NADIA: Red. Red, I- Red?
Red?

She sees the cell phone.

Red!

She gets up, picks up the cell phone, checks the recent calls.

Red.

She hardens visibly.

She crosses to the spilled paint, picks up a paint roller, begins painting the floor.

Paint the Town was written by Ben Turk (under the pseudonym Rex Winsome) and first produced by Insurgent Theatre at The Alchemist Theatre in Milwaukee, WI before an East Coast tour with Peter J Woods in the summer of 2008. Tracy Doyle directed. Jason Hames, Kate Pleuss and Ben Turk were the original cast.

Fall of 2008, the play was work-shopped and revised by the cast with John Kuehne taking Hames' role as Arthur. This edition of the script reflects those revisions.

The author would love to support anyone interested in mounting their own DIY production or adaptation of this play. He's even got a few ideas and updates to include. Please contact Ben through Insurgent Theatre (insurgenttheatre.org) for more information.

Established companies or profit-seeking producers interested in the play should also contact Ben. We might be able to work something out. It'll have more to do with your practices and politics than your ability to pay me. All other productions will be opposed by any means available.

NARRATOR R: As Nadia falls into the deepest most restful sleep of her life, blissful and finally free, she regrets nothing. Her subconscious is rid of the death drive and she dreams of processes, practical repeatable methods by which our political economy will be rearranged. This rearrangement will allow the subjective and objective determination of the will to be reconciled without such desperate destructive actions.

But Red, Red cannot sleep so easily. He soon rises and when he sees the pool of blood and paint, he makes a decision, a decision not unlike Sly Ruendelle's decision to keep the pregnancy that became Mensche. Red decides to sacrifice himself, his chosen identity, his freedom, to allow his Mensche to realize hers.

Nadia Mensche sleeps and when she wakes it will be with an idea in her head, the constructive answer that she will apply and enable all of us to apply, directly and consciously. So, pay attention to what she does when she wakes up. It's important.

The empty space, all the set is loaded in, but not set up. During the initial narration the three actors set the stage, taking turns as the NARRATOR.

The scene is a hand built shack made out of cardboard. A folding table and chair sit down stage right. A few upturned boxes or buckets with utensils are against the upstage wall. A small cot against the stage left wall.

Everything is dirty.

The table is covered with a stack of books and manuals which feature prominently copies of The Blaster's Handbook and The Anarchist Cookbook as well as various hand-stapled or hand-bound books or binders. Underneath the table, there's a crate containing multiple copies of the Koran and other papers. This table faces the audience directly and Red's movements at the table should always be very evident to the audience, as in a cooking show.

A stick of dynamite with coins taped to it sits conspicuously on the table. A few more coins, a box, shiny wrapping paper and the core of a roll of electrical tape sit alongside it.

NARRATOR R: Our story begins in the jungle, the-

NARRATOR A: Storytelling is useless. Winning the audience's hearts and minds with a compelling story will not further the cause of social change. Tragedy, romance and comedy all serve the ruling class.

NARRATOR R: But, our story is *different*. It's full of hardship and dedication, fratricide, sleepwalking, piracy and poverty, but most important, this story is about the revolution, and red paint. Lots of red paint.

NARRATOR A: No. Even tales of revolution, however critical or utopian are only a distraction from your *actual* life. In late stage capitalism, stories consume our desires and exchange them for profit. Hope is a fetter and victory is unimaginable.

NARRATOR N: Now *that* is useless. It all depends on the way a story is told, who tells it to whom and in what context. If the mode of production is removed from-

NARRATOR R: Don't! You'll give it away, you're gonna ruin the story, which begins in-

NARRATOR A: It's not a story, it's a-

NARRATOR R: OUR STORY BEGINS NOW! ...and it begins in the jungle, the deepest, darkest jungle. But by jungle I don't mean:

NARRATOR A: Dr. Livingstone, I presume.

NARRATOR R: or:

NARRATOR N: In the jungle, the quiet jungle, the lion sleeps tonight...

NARRATOR A: Or even Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness jungle.

NARRATOR R: The horror! The horror!

NARRATOR N: We're talking about Upton Sinclair's Jungle. Brecht's jungle. We're talking about:

NADIA *smiles*.

NADIA: Yes.

She cuddles up next to RED. Already half asleep.

NADIA: You're my family now.

Tableau.

RED *sits up, on the edge of the cot, to speak the narration.*

ART: How *could* you?

NADIA: Don't play this game. We did it. I can't give you a lecture on the nature of freedom at gunpoint any more than I could when you asked me a week ago. There's no answer.

ART pulls the trigger!

Click!

There's no bullets! RED took em out last scene.

Click!

NADIA picks up a can of paint. ART drops to his knees.

ART: I'm- Nadia. I'm sorry, I- I didn't realize, I- Nadia? Nadia, I can't- how can I- what can I do to... anything, please Nadia, *anything*, forgive me. Nadia, please. I'll do- Just- please, help me understand!

NADIA hits him in the head with the can of paint. He falls to his hands and knees.

ART: Gah! Ugh... No, Nadia. No.

She hits him again. Straight down on his head. He falls, face first, to the ground. She hits him again, and again. The paint spills.

A spreading pool of red paint pours outward from Art's head.

RED sits on the cot, momentarily transfixed. NADIA stops hitting ART. She gets up, breathing heavy, crosses to the cot.

RED: Can you... will you sleep now?

NARRATOR R: Welcome to the jungle, we've got fun and games we've got-

NARRATOR A: Okay, enough! Dispense of the pop culture references, by now the audience should be adequately situated, and we can begin in earnest.

NARRATOR R: When I say "the jungle" what I mean is the city: the gritty, stinking, filthy, claustrophobic, towers-of-concrete-all-around-me city. That is where our story begins, because that is where our characters reside; where they scratch out their meager existence.

NARRATOR A: Our heroes are not the typical jungle-dwelling types, though. We are not here to tell you about noir-ish detectives, or put-upon office workers. It won't provide some hope of a fairy-tale escape into utopia. Our hero is too smart for that. We are here to describe historical forces and a concrete practical means of altering them. This isn't a story, it's a lesson.

NARRATOR N: Tonight's heroes come from an ancient line of gypsies, rabble rousers, anarchists, artists and troubadours. It's genetic, you see. Every agitator in the world can be traced back to an ancient and increasingly scarce lineage. That is: they *could* be traced back, if not for all the promiscuity, infidelity, and illegitimacy that accompanies the lifestyle... not to mention the raping and wanton murder. Yes, it really is an ugly tradition and perhaps it's for the best that this lineage has been weakened... at least for the genealogist's sake.

NARRATOR A: But, suffice to say, our heroes are getting back to these violent and raucous roots, for better or for worse. Well, for worse. Considering how things will turn out, it's definitely for the worse.

This is a cautionary tale and when you return to your homes at the end of the night it should be with confidence that *you* have made the right decisions in life; decisions completely unlike those made by the characters in this play. As you shuffle off to sleep it will be with the knowledge that at the very least, you will never have to see your own brother's blood on your hands and that your lover, lying beside you- however plain and uninspiring he or she may be, is not a homicidal megalomaniac.

NARRATOR N: Take comfort, my friends, for your life surely bears no resemblance to the lives we will portray for you tonight, and take warning if you find some kindred spirit, some hope for redemption or a spurt of inspiration in what we are here to say. For these are dirty deeds with unpleasant repercussions.

RED: Can we get on with this?

NARRATOR N: Yes Red, sorry. Right away. The introduction of our characters: first, the impatient one, I present: Daniel Bols.

RED: What?

NARRATOR N: He prefers to go by his alias: Big Red. Big Red is the ruthless anti-hero, the absolute embodiment of the permanent revolution, the omelet made by breaking far more eggs than are really necessary.

NARRATOR A: Big Red, as charming as he may seem, is not to be trusted. Which is unfortunate, because he is our main character's, Nadia Mensche's, lover, the homicidal megalomaniac.

RED: What was that?

NARRATOR N: On to our next character. Mensche's ill-fated half-brother: this is Arthur Pratt. Arthur,

RED: However you wanna say it, I have freed you to help you make things happen.

NADIA: Why invest so much in me?

RED: Because of your background. Your real mom and dad.

NADIA: That's bullshit. That "genetic proclivity for inspired violence" is just a game we played, don't pretend it's real or that it justifies-

RED: No, it's your birthright. For whatever reason, not genetically, not by divine right, but still, clearly, you should be... you are- you... should be king.

NADIA: You want a *king*? You want *me* to be king? You, who just said you don't love me, want to be- What is the desire to be ruled by another if it's not love?

RED: Mensche, I...

ART busts in, filthy and exhausted.

ART: Nadia! You- How *could* you?

ART lunges at NADIA. RED intercepts him, they wrestle. ART sees the gun sitting where it was left in scene five. He grabs it, points it at RED who backs off, sits on the bed. ART turns the gun to Nadia, who backs up, against the buckets of paint.

ART: You did it?

NADIA: Yes. We did.

ART: *Why!?!*

NADIA: Arthur.

RED: Art lies to himself everyday.

NADIA: You lied to him in front of me.

RED: And you knew I was lying and you lied right beside me.

NADIA: Red.

RED: You want me to adopt the role of the confessor?

NADIA: No.

RED: So you can forget that you tacitly approved my killing your family in a brutal wave of terrorist attacks? So you can, by forgiving me, adopt the role of-

NADIA: Red! It-

RED: That's what happened.

NADIA: But, haven't we exaggerated the necessity of these acts so we could forget that you did them out of a general blood thirsty-ness, fear of losing me, compensation for your own family's rejection of you and hatred of anyone who loved me because you had to share your love of me with them?

RED: That would make sense, except, I don't love you.

NADIA: Oh yeah?

RED: I *value* you.

NADIA: Why?

RED: The future you are destined to create.

NADIA: Destined? Isn't that one *hell* of a romantic overstatement?

being at best, a side character and representative of the weakening of this genetic line, doesn't really fall into the category of "our heroes" so the warning does not apply to him and you'd actually do well to follow his example, with the exception of his one tragic flaw, that is: the trust and devotion he invests in his half-sister.

NARRATOR R: This brings us to our final character, the true hero of this tale: Miss Nadia Mensche. An enthusiastic idealist, but also one who is always wedding thought with action- even when she's asleep- yes, Nadia Mensche is fully deserving of the title "hero" this evening.

NARRATORS N+A *exit*.

NARRATOR R: Now follow me, little ones, into the jungle of the city, deep below the jungle, in a shack, built in the dark, obsolete section of our city's subway system. Here, under artificial light powered by a lucky tap into some long forgotten power supply for the old trains, here is where our heroes scratch out their existence, fight for our freedom and plot their revolution.

SCENE 1

As the narration ends, the actor playing RED finishes setting up the table and starts the scene by sitting down. He takes a bit of a turnip from his pocket, nibbles it with visible dissatisfaction.

NADIA enters with two grocery bags. RED gets up, pockets the turnip and greets her.

RED: Mensche!

He kisses her hello and helps her with the bags.

RED: What's wrong?

NADIA: Nothing. Another bombing.

RED: Shit. Where?

She hands him a newspaper. He reads with interest.

NADIA: Phoenix.

RED: Phoenix? That's new.

NADIA: They haven't had one yet?

RED: No.

She unpacks the groceries, tossing out anything that is junk food or unhealthy as she goes.

RED: Huh, oh well. More desert... Message from your brother.

NADIA: Hmmm... I didn't do so well here.

RED continues reading.

NADIA: Is it that desperate?

RED: Yes.

NADIA: But, I *am* giddy! I'm distraught and totally sleep deprived.

RED: I can only imagine. Come here, let me-

NADIA: Let me do this my way. Otherwise I'll never sleep. I swear, you do shit on purpose so you can comfort me.

RED: I'm sorry.

NADIA: So you can adopt the role of my soothing balm and forget your own existence within that purpose.

RED: I'm sorry.

NADIA: An apologetic soothing balm.

RED: What else am I supposed to do?

NADIA: Asking *me* to answer that question is not a start.

RED: I want to sleep.

NADIA: Me too.

RED: To make that possible, I have to...

NADIA: You could tell me the truth.

RED: I've never lied to you.

NADIA: You never told me the truth either.

RED: The books are on that table, the alibis are non-existent and the coincidences are absurd.

NADIA: You lied to Arthur.

SCENE 6

RED and NADIA enter, exhausted.

NADIA: Home sweet home!

RED: Mensche.

NADIA: Let me tell you, if I never see a another spin cycle again, it'll be too soon!

RED: Mensche?

NADIA: Yes, dear?

RED: You need to go to sleep.

NADIA: Get my forty winks? Start sawing some logs?

RED: Aren't you tired?

NADIA: Early to bed, early to rise...

RED: Mensche.

NADIA: I am a cliché factory.

RED: I can see that.

NADIA: Yeah.

RED: Mensche, your entire family has just been killed, violently, suddenly.

NADIA: No use crying over spilt milk?

RED: You are in shock and desperately seeking a humorous spin on the situation.

NADIA: When life gives you lemons-

RED: That's enough.

RED: Me neither. Even turnips won't grow properly.

NADIA: What's Arthur want?

RED: I don't know, I didn't read it.

He hands her the envelope.

NADIA: It's open.

RED: I didn't know it was from your brother.

NADIA: It's my name in his handwriting.

RED: What am I? A forensic scientist?

NADIA: Yes, the world's shabbiest. What's this?

She fingers a hole in his shirt.

RED: From the fence. My point is, why would I know Art's handwriting?

NADIA: It's still my name, Red.

RED: I thought it might have been urgent.

NADIA: Shit. This guy *looked* relatively healthy... Is it?

RED: I said: I didn't read it.

NADIA: Then how did you know whether or not it's urgent?

RED: I saw that it's from Art.

NADIA: That doesn't mean it can't be urgent. Maybe my mother died.

RED: Not urgent!

NADIA: What about these, Red?

She holds a package of baked goods.

RED: Those are cupcakes.

NADIA: Muffins.

RED: Same thing.

NADIA: They've got carrots and, looks kinda like...
maybe... bran?

RED: Mensche, dear, we've got carrots growing in the
garden.

NADIA: No we don't.

RED: Well, we *would* if you'd only-

NADIA: I *hate* the garden.

RED: Yes, I know. Your refusal to participate in the
communal gardening responsibilities has not gone
unnoticed.

NADIA: Hey, I provide this commune with more-

RED: That's not-

NADIA: I just prefer a hunter-gatherer mode.

RED: Oh, don't get all Daniel Quinn on me here. This
is about autonomy, not agriculture. The permanent
revolution.

NADIA: The permanent revolution is *all* about
agriculture, Red.

RED: Not Trotsky. Marx. Did you get my tape?

NADIA: Of course.

famous cancer researcher and philanthropist Dr
Stuart Pratt has been identified.

NARRATOR A: Red considers this enough victory for one
night and returns to the shack in the subway with
his dear distraught and totally sleep deprived
Mensche.

The actor playing ART pauses in the doorway and begins the narration.

NARRATOR A: Our heroes hurry to the surface to call Stuart, then make their way to the wake, but not without a pause during which Nadia cleans her half-brother's wounds and Red places a covert call with Art's phone; a call to his young unprincipled accomplice, Dynamo.

RED: The opportunity to have the entire Pratt clan in one place at one time is enough to balance out this contribution to the "evil" telecommunications infrastructure.

Dynamo, we need to change the target one more time.

NARRATOR N: When they get to the condo, Red convinces Arthur to go up first and prepare everyone. But as soon as Art's in the elevator Red turns Nadia around, walks her out of the lobby and back towards home. They walk right past an old rusty truck with a new red paint job and a bed stuffed full of chemically treated fertilizer: a truck that Dynamo just parked next to the condo per Red's instructions.

NARRATOR R: A minute later, when Red and Nadia have achieved safe distance, but before Art *should* have come back down to retrieve them, Dynamo detonates the truck bomb and levels half the block.

NARRATOR N: Upon hearing the explosion, Red and Nadia run back to the scene of the crime and watch as emergency crews dig through the rubble and piece together the remains. They keep their distance and when told that only family of the victims are allowed into the hospital, they opt instead for the same laundromat, the same news reports of patriotic wars against fundamentalism. Hours later, they finally hear word that the body of

She tosses him a roll of electrical tape. RED sits down, tapes the remaining coins to the dynamite.

NADIA: What about Gramsci's cultural hegemony theory?

RED: Thank you.

NADIA: You're welcome. Simple autonomy ignores the complex of social institutions that tend to-

RED: Are you saying... *Bernstein*?

NADIA: No, Antonio Gramsci, or Althusser, over-determination.

RED: All you need is Lenin. A vanguard party to lead the-

NADIA: It's too late. Max Horkheimer and-

RED: Faugh! Lukacs.

NADIA: Barthes.

RED: Mao.

NADIA: Lacan.

RED: Stalin.

NADIA: Stalin? Jesus...

RED: *What?*

NADIA: No, not Jesus... McLuhan.

RED: Oh c'mon.

NADIA: Derrida!

RED: Now you're being ridiculous.

NADIA: Well, you're completely redundant. Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Castro...

RED: Alright, Žižek.

NADIA: Finally. Hmm...

RED: See, I'm not redundant, I'm consistent. Because I'm right.

NADIA: No. Where is your garden?

RED: On twelfth and main.

NADIA: Behind a fence. By trespassing on that lot, you are engaging with the system no less than I am by taking off with some poor sap's-

RED: I'm acting outside it, not depending upon it.

NADIA: That's because one cannot depend on something that *provides nothing*. My system is preferred by virtue of its utility. John Stuart Mill.

RED: Oh, fine. But, those cupcakes?

NADIA: Yes.

Contemplates the cupcakes for a moment, throws them out.

RED: Do those cupcakes provide you with such utility?

NADIA: Red-

RED: Will the satisfaction of not having to grow carrots and prepare a good carrot cake-

NADIA: Red.

RED: Enrich your life enough to balance out the toxic crap, exploitation and imperialism that you'll consume if you eat that?

ART: No, it can't. She's right. I don't-

RED: Yes, you're a bastard. That can't be fixed. We can stop your father calling the police.

ART: How?

RED: Go and explain ourselves.

ART: We- he's gonna call the cops. We can't go there, he'll-

RED: You still have that wake tonight?

ART: Yes. It's- now it's more than just a wake, it's- well...

RED: The whole family will be there.

ART: Yes.

NADIA: When did you tell Stuart to wait two hours?

ART looks at his cell phone.

ART: Two hours ago.

He starts dialing.

RED: Upstairs.

RED grabs the phone. They exit.

NADIA: You euthanized your friends?

ART: There was nothing else I could do.

NADIA: Jesus.

ART: You always say I'll never understand you, but, well... this is- all I'm trying to do is what's best for you, can't you-

NADIA: You think dragging me out of here at gunpoint is best for me?

ART: I'm sorry. I know. I-

NADIA: Sorry for what?

ART: I- I'm-

NADIA: How can you apologize if you don't even recognize what you did wrong?

ART: I don't know.

NADIA: Listen, you and your dad, you want me to come back to you, deny my life- You- you want me to reject *my life* in order to *legitimize* yours. I'm not going to play Patti Hearst for you.

ART: That's not-

NADIA: Yes it is. Honestly, Arthur, can you tell me you didn't fantasize about me, coming to you and your dad crying and telling lies about being brainwashed?

ART: I...

NADIA: You want me to beg and be cleansed in your forgiveness, re-virginized.

RED: This can be fixed, Art.

NADIA: Red, I already threw them out!

RED: Okay.

She reads the message.

NADIA: You're thorough today.

RED: Someone has to be.

NADIA: It's an invitation.

RED: See, why would Art send anything urgent.

NADIA: Why would anyone send anything urgent?

RED: Dynamo might.

NADIA: Why would Dyna write to *me*?

RED: Why does Dynamo do anything she does?

NADIA: I... see your point.

RED: What's the problem, anyway?

NADIA: It's not a problem, just-

RED has run out of coins.

RED: Hrm. you got any change?

NADIA: Change? Like, money?

RED: Oh. Yeah.

NADIA: I'm just curious why you found it necessary to open my mail.

RED: You seen any piggy banks laying around? Fine. Why do you find it necessary that I *don't* open your mail? Is your brother conspiring against me?

NADIA: It's an *invitation!*

RED: I *know*. Tell him next time he'd do better to put his name on the *outside*. I'll lose interest before I open it.

NADIA: He's not-

RED: His secret messages would get by unabused.

NADIA: Red, I'm-

RED: Shit! I might have to panhandle.

NADIA: You still haven't justified opening my mail.

RED: and I don't *have* to.

NADIA: If I have to justify eating carrot bran muffins-

RED: Cupcakes.

NADIA: Then you have to justify opening my mail.

RED: Okay... I thought it might be from your secret lover.

NADIA: What use do I have for a secret lover?

RED: Excitement. Variety.

NADIA: I can't imagine anyone more exciting.

RED: Romantic overstatement?

NADIA: Perhaps. Who is this exciting secret lover?

RED: Cesár, the latin tiger. The one who steals you from my bed at night.

NADIA: Don't. Don't joke about that.

RED: He can't help having thoughts. Everything else follows naturally.

NADIA: Ignorance isn't an excuse.

ART: I asked you to explain! You said I'd never understand.

NADIA: Shut up.

ART: No, Nadia. What do you want?

NADIA: I want you to not have come here. I want you to not have uttered a word of your crazy fucking suspicions, I want you to not be fucking stupid.

RED: Reverse causality gets you no where.

ART: I'm sorry, okay? I'm fucking sorry.

NADIA: I don't give a shit.

ART: Please Nadia! I can't- I'm just trying to... Why are you doing this to me?

NADIA: You come here, threaten me-

ART: You- I just spent six hours trying to help my best friends die. How can you be- why can't you understand that?

NADIA: I don't...

RED: Art, how *could* she? You can't expect anyone to understand that.

ART: But- but then... you can?

RED: No, I don't. I've only taking into account that your judgment is even more fucked than usual. When did you talk to-

where this is, and- I wasn't gonna... If I don't come back in two hours he'll call.

RED: Two hours from when?

ART: I had to- I didn't let him call because... I-

NADIA: Because you wanted to "bring us to justice" yourself. Look, he's playing the hero.

ART: No.

NADIA: Then, why?

RED: So he could save *you*. The cops will take us both.

NADIA: Fine. That's still playing the hero. Even worse, *my* noble protector. I don't need you Art.

ART: Would you prefer that I'd let dad call? That I'd brought half the precinct down here with me? My *Empire*?

NADIA: No.

ART: What then? That I'd died?

RED: Art.

ART: Well, Jesus! *Someone* tried to kill me, and then I come here and-

NADIA: Come here with a fucking gun.

RED: *Mensche*, have a little sympathy.

NADIA: He was going to kill you!

RED: Not without reason.

NADIA: Reason? Because he thought you- that's not *reason* that's a baseless accusation.

RED: What? *Cesár*?

NADIA: No. The other thing.

RED: Your somnambulism?

NADIA: I don't want to talk about it.

RED: Okay, changing the subject... we've got bombs in Phoenix, bran muffins, the garden, latin tigers, Art.

NADIA: Arthur or art-art?

RED: Oh, fuck art!

NADIA: Yes! Art-art! Barking art. Art! Art! Art! The lecture!

RED: Barthelme's Art History Lecture?

NADIA: Art! Art! Art!

RED: So, you got cher *Mo-net* and *Ma-net*, that's a tricky one. *Mo-net*'s the one did all the water lilies n shit, his colors were blues and greens. *Ma-net*'s the one did bareass on the grass n shit, his colors were browns n greens. Then you got cher Kandinsky, a bad mother-

NADIA: Fucking shit. Why did you do that?

RED: All them pick-up-sticks pictures- I'm concerned.

NADIA: You think I'm not? You think I don't get totally fruck out?

RED: I know. I've carried you home freaking-out.

NADIA: Damn it, Red! I get fruck out every time it crosses my mind. Like right now. You asshole.

RED: I'm sorry.

NADIA: God!

RED: I just- I don't want you to wander into a live part of the system-

NADIA: Stop it, stop it, stop it! Fuck you. Are you even listening to me?

RED: Mensche...

NADIA: Don't. I swear to god-

RED: What can I...?

NADIA: You do this just so you can comfort me.

RED: That's bullshit.

NADIA: You do it on purpose! You can't just leave it alone, you find this *one* fucked up thing- this fucking *suicidal shit* that I can't even-

RED: Listen, we don't *have* to live this way, we-

NADIA: No. I'm not going to let this ruin-

RED: If she's causing-

NADIA: She's- I won't. I won't let *Sylvia* affect my choices.

RED: But she *is*-

NADIA: Don't fucking say it!

RED: Even subconsciously-

NADIA: Red, *don't!* You *can't* talk about this.

RED: On whose authority?

She hits him again.

ART: Na- Nadia...

She covers his mouth.

RED: Mensche!

RED attempts to restrain Nadia. She elbows him in the guts.

RED: This isn't- Nrg! He's *consistent*, you can't expect... fuck... What did Stuart do?

NADIA: I don't give a shit.

She hits ART again. RED restrains her more successfully.

RED: I do. Art?

ART: Bwah! Ha-boo-hoo-hoo!

RED: Let him get up.

NADIA: Jesus fucking christ.

NADIA stands.

NADIA: Fuck you.

She kicks a can of paint. RED crouches by ART.

RED: Art, what did your dad say?

ART: Ugh... hu- he- He was- he tried calling them- the cops.

RED: But, he didn't?

ART: I wouldn't let him. I- we fought. I made him wait. I told him I was the only one who knows

ART: Nadia! The- arg... the bombing and then-

NADIA: Yes, it's a coincidence, a crazy fucking coincidence, but we're not trying to kill you, and we *didn't* kill those people.

ART: Rrrmmm... Who did?

RED: We don't know.

NADIA: Did you call the cops?

ART: I- I... God, stop, please? I told dad.

RED: Shit.

NADIA: Told him what?

ART: I told him... I told him. Nadia, I didn't know what to do. Ah!

NADIA: Told him *what*?

ART: Do you know what sarin gas does to the human body?

NADIA: Arthur-

ART: You see a roomful of your friends, people who you've devoted your life to saving, die, vomit their... out on the floor you watch that happen and then come and tell me- and then try to be- I told him what I was thinking.

NADIA: You *fuck*.

She hits him.

ART: Gah! No...

RED: Mensche.

NADIA: Stupid fucking *shit*.

NADIA: What?

RED: Yours or *Sylvia's*?

NADIA: Fuck you. Don't. I can't do this here.

RED: Then-

NADIA: I can't! I can't!!!

RED: Find someone, somewhere that you *can* talk about it with!

NADIA: No one else-

RED: You have to do *something*, Mensche.

NADIA: No more. Stop. Let me go, get-

The actor playing Red snaps out of character and addresses the audience.

NARRATOR R: This goes on for a while, hours actually, until finally Nadia exhausts herself and collapses into sleep, leaving Red to contemplate his inability to exorcize the deadly influences of capitalism and family on his precious Mensch.

NARRATOR N: Somnambulism or sleepwalking, is a very troubling thing for Nadia. It's generally not dangerous, unless, like our heroes, you happen to live just off the beaten path, and by the beaten path, I mean live subway tracks with trains barreling down them.

NARRATOR A: Waking a sleepwalker is usually a bad idea. They tend to become startled and disoriented, and may fall or flail out and hurt themselves, or others. The thing to do with somnambulists is to lead them back to bed without waking them. Unfortunately, this option is not available to Big Red. When he wakes to discover an empty space next to him, he's thrown into a panic and darts out onto the subway tracks, without pausing to collect his wits or a flashlight.

NARRATOR N: He casts headlong into the pitch dark of the tunnels, shouting and hoping to find Nadia before a speeding train does. Eventually, her stumbling meandering body and his screaming hurtling one meet. The lovers collide, headfirst, eyes wide but seeing nothing, in the dark.

NARRATOR R: This is the rudest possible awakening into the most discomforting circumstances for poor Nadia. She's thrown into a fit of terror, a tantrum of disorientation and confusion which she hates thinking of, even days later, after Big Red has carried her home, attempting with mixed success to retrace his steps in the dark, and tucked her warmly in to bed.

RED: Did he call the police?

ART: What?

RED: Did you call the police?

NADIA: Or was your plan to just exterminate us vigilante style?

ART: You can't murder a room full of people!

RED: On whose authority? Yours, or The Empire's?

ART: What Empire?

RED: The police. Did you call-

NADIA: We *didn't* murder a room full of people.

ART: Not you, *he* did.

NADIA: Anything he did I did.

ART: No.

NADIA: I am aware of everything he does and I am complicit in it.

ART: That's what you want to believe, but-

RED: Same with you and The Empire.

ART: No!

ART grabs Nadia's wrist and tries to drag her out of the room.

NADIA: You ignorant shit.

She wrestles with him, quickly pins him to the ground, twisting his arm.

SCENE 5

The actor playing Art takes a gun from his belt or pocket and sits in the chair facing the door as he finishes the narration.

ART holds the gun, nodding off, and watching the door. NADIA and RED are heard on the other side. ART wakes up points the gun at the door.

RED and NADIA enter. NADIA sees Art and immediately pushes RED behind her, shielding his body with hers.

RED: I am just full of disgust.

ART: Get away from her!

NADIA: Arthur...

ART: GET AWAY FROM HER.

RED: Who do you think you're going to shoot, Art?

ART: Goddamn it, Biggy, get away.

NADIA crosses to Art.

RED: What do you want us to do?

ART: Put your- get...

NADIA takes the gun from Art.

NADIA: He didn't kill those people, Arthur. He didn't.

ART: Nadia, you don't know that!

NADIA hands the gun off. RED unloads the bullets, sets it on the counter.

NADIA: What the fuck did you come here to do?

NARRATOR A: Nadia's sleepwalking is even more troublesome because of its psychological source. What she recalls of the dreams accompanying her wanderings indicate a subconscious discontent with her current living arrangement. The sleepwalking started a short while after she and Red moved here, and Red believes it results from a secret desire to escape her commitment to these life choices.

NARRATOR N: At first, he thought she was faking it, that this wasn't somnambulism at all, but an intentional attempt to sabotage the life she only *pretends* to want to live with him. But now, he trusts her. Now, he blames her family.

RED: They re-impose bourgeois mythology on her. When conscious she completely negates these contradictory instincts, but when sleeping, nightmares of her loving, well-adjusted family tap directly into the thanatos drive, which compels humanity to self-destruction.

NARRATOR A: And that brings us back to our story. For tonight, after Big Red has returned to bed, carefully snuggling in beside his lover and confident that the previous exertions have rendered her solidly, fastly asleep and safe from her nocturnal expeditions, Nadia proves his confidence misplaced.

The actors playing NADIA and RED get back into the cot. The actor playing ART exits.

NADIA stands and slowly crosses to a cabinet on the other side of the room, where she retrieves a long knife. She carries this knife, vacantly, with a glazed stare, back to the cot. As she approaches the cot, knife raised, she suddenly wakes, dropping the knife on the floor. This sound stirs Red who feels for NADIA then jumps, bolt upright in bed.

RED: Mensche!

He throws himself out of bed, leaping halfway to the door.

NADIA: Red, I'm here. I'm here!

RED turns mid-motion, loses his balance and falls. NADIA runs to him, takes him in her arms. Sobbing.

RED: We have to do something about this.

NADIA: Don't talk.

RED: We have to-

NADIA: Later.

They return to bed, the actor playing ART re-enters.

NARRATOR A: It seems Nadia's suicidal subconscious has identified Red as the obstacle to it's success, an unpleasant development, to say the least. For tonight, our heroes put it aside and settle into sleep without further discussion. The next day, they'll each do something about it, in their own way.

Nadia gets up early, leaving Big Red a sign so he'll know she's not wandering aimless through tunnels again and goes to find someone, somewhere that she can talk to about this terrifying experience. She has no one to turn to but her brother, Arthur. For, he is the only other character in our story.

NADIA gets up, leaves an object, as a sign, in bed next to RED and exits, with the narrator.

RED wakes, looks at the sign, stretches, and stands up. He becomes the narrator.

bodies and out the doors. The Pratt doctors weren't allowed to provide any assistance, or farewell to many of their friends and patients as they suffocated in a series of convulsive spasms.

NARRATOR R: Yes, it wasn't until Stuart and Arthur Pratt had been treated themselves for limited exposure to sarin that they were finally free. Well, free to spend the rest of the night and some of the next day treating people who inhaled the smallest quantities of gas and attempting to identify the dead.

NARRATOR A: Meanwhile our heroes waited by the payphone in the laundromat to hear back from Arthur while the televisions drummed up support for another unrelated war on another impoverished and unstable nation, with coincidentally useful natural resources.

RED: The fall of an empire requires a simultaneous over-extended foreign policy and domestic instability. Homegrown terrorists can easily achieve both goals by including a few simple red herrings in their strikes- a dropped Koran here, a doctored video there. The government is only too eager for a pretext to start one of their self-destructive wars.

NARRATOR A: It's not until the next afternoon that our heroes hear that the Pratt doctors have miraculously survived. Red and Nadia give up waiting for Arthur's call and come home, full of disgust.

The actors playing Nadia and Red exit.

with confidence away from the hell he'd just set loose.

NARRATOR A: The banquet was arranged to honor Stuart and Arthur's contribution to cancer research. They hadn't discovered the cure, but a new technique and new drugs to reduce the pain and difficulties.

RED: They weren't solving anything, just adapting human beings to live with cancer. At what point do we stop being human and start being a set of patent-pending chemical accommodations for a world which we are steadily making uninhabitable?

NARRATOR N: The banquet was attended by The Friends of Stuart and Arthur Pratt; cancer patients and donors to the doctors' foundation. These respected members of the community are the ones who took a Sarin shower when Red's bombs went off.

NARRATOR A: But, Big Red failed again. This time he underestimated the security detail that had been dispatched to the Pratt family following the first attempt. These efficient and dedicated body guards had Stuart and Arthur pulled to a safe corner of the room within seconds of the explosion. They held the doctors in this corner as hundreds of people, many of whom were their closest friends ran around the room screaming in panic at the fires, the alarms and the cold quickly evaporating liquid pouring from the sprinkler system. The well-equipped body guards provided gas masks and cover as soon as the first people began drooling and trembling, a first reaction to the sarin. They restrained Stuart and Arthur when the victims lost control of their bodily functions completely, vomiting, urinating and defecating in their clothes. These doctors, pinned down by their own protectors could do nothing but watch as some victims threw themselves into the fires in an attempt to escape the gas. Finally, the fires were subdued and these bodyguards carried Stuart and Arthur across the floor of twitching comatose

NARRATOR R: But, Big Red... Big Red has different plans, an entirely different, much more radical solution to this problem, because, like any good communist, Big Red solves problems by directly attacking their root causes.

The actor playing Red exits.

SCENE 2

NADIA and ART enter, carrying armloads of buckets of paint. All red paint. Some is spilled on the sides of the buckets, and on Nadia's hands. They are out of breath and laughing.

ART: I can't believe I let you talk me into these things, Nadia.

NADIA: Well, you're still Sly's son. Help bring in the rest.

ART: Mom's name is Sylvia, and I can't.

NADIA: What? Why not?

ART: There's- I just can't.

NADIA: C'mon, you've made it this far.

ART: Now that we're safe, away from the truck, I don't think I can go near it again. I'm terrified the cops are out there and they'll catch us red handed as soon as we touch it... Literally.

NADIA: Yes. Literally.

ART: Besides, I do have to get going, father will be wondering.

NADIA: Ah, Arthur. You're also your father's son.

ART: You say that so hatefully.

NADIA: No I don't.

ART: Well, it's a hateful thing to say.

NADIA: We're not going to talk about that now. We had enough heavy discussion over breakfast. Red should

The actor playing Nadia re-enters, begins the narration.

NARRATOR N: Nadia Mensche and Big Red rush to the hospital where they are promptly turned away by security who isn't allowing anyone near the overflowing emergency room. They spend hours waiting in the Laundromat. They go against their principles to call Arthur and Stuart from a payphone and watch coverage of the attack on ceiling mounted televisions. The reporters, full of big story energy make up all the favorite speculations, stories designed to engender fear of vast fundamentalist networks and hope for our side in the war on terror

NARRATOR A: A few notes on sarin gas: sarin is a fluorinated organophosphorous compound that someone with the right chemistry skills and access to the right equipment could easily manufacture and load into a pressurized container. In its condensed form sarin is a liquid, but if exposed to air it quickly evaporates and is capable of rapidly infiltrating the human respiratory system. It is most effective as a weapon if released in an aerosol form in a confined space.

NARRATOR R: For example, if one redirects the sprinkler system of an auditorium to his pressurized container of liquid sarin and then sets off some well placed phosphorus grenades, placed in garbage cans near the exits for example, perhaps one could, with a single detonation, block the exit and release the toxin onto the crowd simultaneously.

NARRATOR N: This plan should have been fool proof. The imaginative approach, the unexpected target, and the excessive brutality all made the set up easy. Once Red had visual confirmation of Stuart and Arthur on the platform politely and modestly listening to the emcee's introduction, he set the remote timer for his packages and walked casually,

They shake hands and RED sits at the desk. He looks anxiously at the door, then sits, casually at his desk. NADIA returns and begins dressing quickly.

RED: What's going on?

NADIA: There was another attempt.

RED: Attempt?

NADIA: On the TV, at the laundromat. My father- We've gotta go.

RED: Was it-

NADIA: We've gotta go.

RED: Mensche, are they-

NADIA: I don't know. Come on, hospital.

RED: Tell me what happened.

NADIA: The auditorium, gas. Arthur didn't answer.

They exit.

be here soon, he'll help me bring the rest in.
What fantastic luck!

ART: To find a truck stocked full up of red paint?

NADIA: Idling, with the keys in the ignition. How could we resist?

ART: Well, *I* could've.

NADIA: Well, yeah, but you're banal and cowardly.

ART: Yeah. Well... What are you and Biggy gonna do with all this?

NADIA: We'll think of something.

ART: Hey, you *could*... paint the town red! Hey?

NADIA: Art, that's not funny.

ART: Funny is in the eye of the beholder.

NADIA: No. Funny is an absolute value. One which you lack.

ART: To each his own.

NADIA: Alright, cliché factory, time to go.

ART: What? This shack not big enough for the two of us?

NADIA: Yes! You've got to get back to work, don't you?

ART: That's true. You know... I have to ask again, one more time, for you to reconsider.

NADIA: And you know I can't.

ART: I was up nights worrying about you *before*.

NADIA: Don't make me wish I hadn't told you.

ART: Don't say that!

NADIA: I can't just leave.

ART: Why not?

NADIA: This lifestyle is important to me.

ART: Why?

NADIA: You can't have freedom without responsibility.

ART: Stealing and scraping together everything that
you own-

NADIA: No! Owing *nothing*.

ART: Everything you use then. *That's* living
responsibly?

NADIA: Yes. We are being-in-itself, completely
independent from The Empire.

ART: Oh, yeah. *The Empire*.

NADIA: Yes. The Empire.

ART: We're beating a dead horse.

NADIA: That's not my fault, cliché factory. You
brought it up.

ART: Because I *don't understand*.

NADIA: Well, you aren't going to.

ART: I'm not stupid, Nadia. Stupid people can't make
it through med school.

NADIA: I'm not saying that you're stupid. I'm saying
that talking to you about this... it's like if you

RED: Got you out of bed didn't I?

NADIA: Hurgh... What time is it?

RED: Time?

NADIA: Roughly.

RED: Early nightish.

NADIA: Then he's probably done.

RED: Where you going? Painting?

NADIA: Laundromat, gonna call Arthur.

RED: You- you going out like that?

NADIA: What? You don't like my dirty whites?

RED: Well... You've got the bells on.

NADIA: Oh.

NADIA takes off the bell, tosses it to RED, exits wearing pajamas. RED waits a few seconds in agitation. Then exits upstage opposite the door and returns with two large bags of fertilizer, which he drags downstage to the audience. He addresses an audience member.

RED: Dynamo? Here, these're ready. There are two
more.

He drags the bags to "Dynamo" they repeat the action with two more bags.

RED: You can get them to the truck from here? This
time the target is your choice, my project should
be finished. Give me twenty-four hours, comrade.

RED: Mensche.

NADIA: Art art art! You gotcher Joseph Beuys.

RED: Jospheh Beuys was a romantic idealist.

NADIA: He sez all society is a sculpture-

RED: He fancied himself some kind of a modern shaman.
That's hippie shit.

NADIA: If society is a sculpture, then a
revolutionary *has to* be an artist.

RED: Joseph Beuys was nothing but a failed Luftwaffe
fighter pilot who got hit on the head too hard
when his plane went down.

NADIA: I'll hit you on the head too hard.

RED: You gotta get out of bed first. Art or
revolution, you aren't getting *anything* done in
there.

NADIA: Fine.

*She gets up, charges him, the tether trips her,
he sneaks up and hits her, they play fight, him
staying just out of her reach. She unties the
tether.*

RED: See, exercise. Makes you feel better doesn't it?

NADIA: *This* makes me feel better.

RED: Ow! Ow! Ow! Okay, okay. We're done.

NADIA: What? I just got loose and now- hey! Hey,
that's cheating. Ow!

RED: Okay, we're finished?

NADIA: Jerk.

tried to explain... cell receptor signaling
technologies to me in Japanese. We just end up
screaming gibberish at each other.

ART: But, I don't know Japanese.

NADIA: Exactly.

ART: I'm not saying you have to get a job, Nadia.
Living without a square job-

NADIA: Not just a square job. *Any* job. Anything that
requires monetary transaction or labor exchange.

ART: That can't really mean you *have* to live down in
the subway system.

NADIA: Yes. No.

ART: With you sleepwalking?

NADIA: Red and I might find something else.

ART: Might?

NADIA: Will.

ART: But, in the- you *know* you won't- why can't
you... Mom and dad would put you up. You could
live free and-

NADIA: Living on your father's money is the total
opposite of living free.

ART: What is *so terrible* about my father?

NADIA: I told you, we're not going to have that
conversation.

ART: When did he ever do anything but support and
nurture you?

NADIA: Arthur!

ART: You- you weren't even born when-

NADIA: Fuck you! Don't try and put me in the role of the childish ingrate. Stop trying to force me to talk about something you will not and can not understand.

ART: I can- I... You're right. I can't understand.

NADIA: Then end it.

ART: But, I-

NADIA: It's futile, okay?

ART: Can we talk about why you hate my father's money so much, then?

NADIA: That's a matter of principle, it's reasoned, not felt. Hate doesn't enter into it.

ART: You sure don't *like* it.

NADIA: You, your father, our mother, everyone in the world is totally dependent on that stuff.

ART: Except you and Biggy.

NADIA: Yes.

ART: Doesn't that just make you dependent on him?

NADIA: Arthur.

ART: Well, doesn't it? Instead of my father controlling you, that- you've got your boyfriend-

NADIA: If there's a man in my life that *must* mean I'm *dependent* on him?

RED: The whole scene. My favorite.

NADIA: Well, that puts him on *my* side. Jean Genet.

RED: You crafty bitch! Ionesco.

NADIA: Bertolt Brecht.

RED: Fucking Germans don't mean anything they say.

NADIA: Mayakovsky.

RED: Formalists. Faugh!

NADIA: C'mon.

RED: Baudrillard.

NADIA: Joseph Beuys.

RED: Another German!

NADIA: Hey, I'm German!

RED: You were born in Germany to a Frenchwoman and an American.

NADIA: By a German. Who raised me.

RED: Raised you wrong.

NADIA: I know.

RED: Have you seen him since-

NADIA: No. Joseph Beuys.

RED: Have you even seen Art?

NADIA: We aren't going to talk about that, we're going to talk about art.

RED: Because, Nadia Mensche is a revolutionary.

NADIA: Why's the revolution always gotta be destructive?

RED: Destruction is creative too. You must destroy to build. Blixa Bargeld n shit.

NADIA: What the fuck are you building?

RED: I'm still...

NADIA: You're never gonna build anything.

RED: What, you want me to get a smock and some pastels? Memorize some Shakespeare?

NADIA: Yes. No. Real art, not bourgeois therapy or status symbols. Our art, corrosive unacceptability, Theodor Adorno!

RED: Ugh! Adolf Loos.

NADIA: Walter Benjamin.

RED: Let's get out of Frankfurt, okay? Umm... Genet.

NADIA: What? Jean Genet was one of the most political-

RED: As expressed by *Roger* in *The Balcony*.

NADIA: What?

RED: Scene 5, the revolutionaries are in the café talking about using Chantal as a symbol of the revolution.

NADIA: I don't remember that.

RED: You must have read the revised edition.

NADIA: He revised that out?

ART: Nadia, it's- There's nothing wrong with depending on someone. I mean, everyone has to eat. You need a dependable source of your basic needs.

NADIA: And I've got that.

ART: Through your controlling, dangerous, insane boyfriend.

NADIA: No.

ART: Yes.

NADIA: No! If anything *he* depends on *me*. Anyway, I'd rather count on one person who I know and trust than the whole bloodthirsty apparatus you ignorantly pay into-

ART: Even if it's-

NADIA: An apparatus designed to deny millions of people *their* basic human needs in order to force them into your service.

ART: Nadia! He's seriously jeopardizing your-

NADIA: It's a matter of principle.

ART: I don't give a damn about your principles, he's endangering your life!

NADIA: Not on purpose.

ART: What does that matter? Nadia, you- it's not good. He's a-

NADIA: You don't even... Listen, he's willing to leave.

ART: He is?

NADIA: Yes. For me, because of this- at first he wasn't... he thought I was trying to ruin... Now, he knows and he's willing to give this up.

ART: Then why don't you?

NADIA: Because he doesn't want to. He's willing, but it's a sacrifice.

ART: Yeah, and?

NADIA: And sacrifice is slave morality. Philosophically, it's... offensive.

ART: But, he's willing to do it.

NADIA: Yes. His willingness is a sign of weakness and it shames us both.

ART: Shames?

NADIA: Absolutely.

ART: But... Nadia this doesn't make sense.

NADIA: If someone made you willing to... to give up your job. Just leave all those people to fucking rot-

ART: Nadia!

NADIA: If you knew you would do *that* for someone, if they asked, if you loved them *that* much, you'd be ashamed, wouldn't you?

ART: Okay, yes.

NADIA: Well, that's what self-sacrifice is for us. It's a devaluation. That's why we can't just go suck off Sylvia and Stuart's teat.

ART: But... Nadia, you're going to end up sacrificing yourself instead. You- it's dangerous.

NADIA: It's not lame.

RED: It *is* vandalism.

NADIA: I know you have other...

She gestures at the table, notices that it's clear.

NADIA: Other projects.

RED: It's a statement. They don't-

NADIA: It's not just a statement. It's-

RED: A conquest? A call to action? That's no different than hope.

NADIA: It's *not* a call to action, you asshole. It's creation. An appropriation of property, a product. It begs to be emulated.

RED: How is that not just a statement?

NADIA: Speaking of statements and "calls to action" just what've you been doing to me all morning?

RED: It's not morning.

NADIA: Whatever.

RED: It's not the same. Your red paint idea speaks without speaking *to* anyone.

NADIA: It does make a statement, but it also does more than that. It's a work of art.

RED: Art?

NADIA: Yeah. Art. Rothko n shit. There's nothing wrong with art. It's construction, why can't Nadia Mensche be an artist?

RED: If living in fear and hope is self-negating,
then doing penance for it is self-affirming.

NADIA: A double negative?

RED: A transvaluation of slave morality.

NADIA: Do I really owe for my whole life?

RED: Sure, if this construct works for you, but not
for your mother. For you.

NADIA: My mother died before I-

RED: *Mensche*, Sly chose you, before she met Stuart
Pratt. You were an investment, one that'll surely
pay off, if I can get it out of bed.

NADIA: No.

RED: Start small. Some options: exercises. Jumping
jacks, situps and pushups, ninja pushups-

NADIA: No.

RED: Number two: take a baseball bat to the outdoor
café. Eat pickin's from the ruins while they just
stare. Number three: take a walk and... call Art.
I'm tired of talking to him. Number four: umm...

NADIA: Red, my mother is-

RED: I know, *Mensche*.

NADIA: Leave me alone.

RED: I've left you alone for three goddamn days. No
more. Number four: Paint something red!

NADIA: I know you don't like the paint idea.

RED: She rises to defend her lame vandalism.

NADIA: No. I won't. We'll be alright. We're going to
fix it, okay?

ART: I don't-

NADIA: Trust me.

ART: I-

NADIA: Trust me, Arthur. I'll be alright. Now, go.

ART: We'll see you at Jake's on Friday?

NADIA: Yes. Congratulations.

ART: Will you..?

NADIA: Yes, I'll call you.

ART: Every day?

NADIA: So you know.

ART: Collect?

NADIA: From that laundromat.

ART: Okay. Bye.

Hugs and kisses. ART begins to go.

NADIA: Arthur?

ART: Yeah?

NADIA: Thanks. I couldn't have... talking to you
helped.

ART: Really?

NADIA: Yes. Now, go.

ART: Thanks, bye.

ART exits. NADIA makes herself busy, puts the knife away, arranges the paint buckets. She completely avoids Red's bomb-making table.

RED enters, with a piggy bank and a bag. He sets them on the table. He begins digging through the food stock. Everything is either been sorted as junk food, or requires preparation.

RED: Mensche. You would not believe-

NADIA: Red!

RED: How hard it is just to get a hold of some money.

NADIA: Look!

RED: I'm starving. Spend all day-

NADIA: Paint!

RED: I don't suppose you cooked any of-

NADIA: I said: LOOK!

RED: Mensche. I'm grumpy, please tell me you've got something for me to eat.

NADIA: You limp-dick motherfucker.

RED: Wow. That's a bit harsh.

NADIA: Well, you're the second one trying to feed me bullshit today.

RED: Who's fallout am I catching?

NADIA: My brother's.

RED: Shoulda known.

NADIA: Longer than this.

RED: What does Sly's diary say about hope?

NADIA: Nothing important.

RED: Bullshit. Tell me.

NADIA: Hope is what you do when you're too scared to act-

RED: Exactly.

NADIA: Or too stupid to give up.

RED: So, you're guilty.

NADIA: Yes. I'm stupid and I'm scared and-

RED: And you are doing a disservice to your mother's memory.

NADIA: What?

RED: By mourning Sylvia you are wronging Sly. You have been proven guilty of hoping and you must pay a penalty. Your mother can no longer atone for the last twenty-odd years, but you may still redeem these last few days.

NADIA: It's my responsibility. My mother's twenty-odd years of conformity are the direct result of my existence. They are *my* years.

RED: Well even more you owe. Your first penance-

NADIA: How can you do penance if we don't do hope?

RED: Whatever might get you off that cot, honey.

NADIA: Red. I'm serious.

RED: No. That'd be pretty bad taste, and not very secure.

NADIA: Secure?

RED: For Stuart. He's got a team of bodyguards. It's at your aunt's condo, downtown, tomorrow night.

NADIA: So?

RED: Art asked me to get you out of bed.

NADIA: No. I can't. All those people...

RED: Don't make me disappoint your brother. He holds me in such high regard, I'd rather not jeopardize my position with him. Please, get up-

NADIA: No. My mother is dead.

RED: Mensch, this is bullshit and you know it.

NADIA: My mother, Sly Ruendelle, is dead.

RED: Sly Ruendelle's been dead *decades*. Sylvia Pratt just died. Who the fuck needs her?

NADIA: Red!

RED: Am I wrong?

NADIA: But, she's still my mother.

RED: And that's still an obligatory socially ingrained response, not your genuine feelings.

NADIA: Don't tell me what my genuine feelings are. I wanted- she could've-

RED: When? How long were you going to hope she'd come back?

NADIA: Red, look...

RED: Yes?

NADIA: Paint!

RED: Uh-huh.

NADIA: Red paint.

RED: Red *paint*.

NADIA: There's more of it.

RED: Where's it from?

NADIA: A truck.

RED: That one parked upstairs?

NADIA: Is it big and brown?

RED: Rusty. Used to be white.

NADIA: Full of buckets of paint?

RED: Red paint?

NADIA: That's the one. I stole it. Me and Arthur.

RED has begun tinkering with his bomb. He breaks open the piggy bank and begins taping the coins to what he had built earlier.

RED: Art stole that truck?

NADIA: Well, rode along while I stole it, mostly.

RED: What were you doing with Art?

NADIA: Reassuring him that every car we drove past wasn't an undercover cop, mostly.

RED: Of course. But *before* you found a truck full of paint... Unless- don't tell me this heist was planned in advance?

NADIA: Spontaneous, mostly.

RED: Good, Art's a poor choice for an accomplice.

NADIA: You know it. We got together to discuss somnambulism over breakfast.

RED: Really, and he didn't drag you to the asylum? This the invitation?

NADIA: Nope, my own doing.

RED: Curious decision. What's the invitation then?

NADIA: Another thing. Family dinner at Jake's next week day after their awards banquet. Breakfast was actually fruitful.

RED: That's a surprise.

NADIA: Yes, but I do feel... unburdened. Let's get the paint.

RED: Occupied.

NADIA: Your project?

RED: My... project.

NADIA: Hope it's fruitful.

RED: It will be.

She exits.

RED: More than your breakfast.

RED begins searching his books.

*He sets the plate down by the bed, pulls some vegetables out of his pocket and eats them raw.
NADIA doesn't eat.*

NADIA: I hate the garden.

RED: I know, but look! It's finally got carrots! You should eat Mensche.

NADIA: No.

RED: You can't go without eating.

NADIA: Yes I can.

RED: You *can't*.

NADIA: On whose authority?

RED: Mensche, don't-

NADIA: Don't tell me what I can't do.

RED: I wonder, does table eight count as hunting, or gathering? Nobody even tried to chase me... Maybe you need to work up an appetite. C'mon, breath of fire.

NADIA: My mother is dead.

RED: Mensche.

NADIA: Red.

RED: I talked to Art, the invitation is still on.

NADIA: How? It was for dinner at Jake's, night after the... banquet thing.

RED: The banquet is tonight, and they changed it. Now it's a wake.

NADIA: At *Jake's*?

SCENE 4

The actor playing Nadia ends the narration by lying down on the cot.

All the books and materials on Red's table have been removed or put away.

NADIA sleeps on the cot, with the tether and bell attached. She stirs, slowly, sits up, staring blankly and begins to walk across the room. She is stopped by the tether, turns around, attempts to cross downstage, stopped by the tether again. RED arrives, whistling and carrying a fancy plate with food on it. When he sees Nadia he sets the food down and escorts her calmly back to bed.

RED: Mensche! C'mon... oh, shit. Hey, I've been trying to get you up for three days, but...

She wakes, startled, starts like she's going to freak out for a few seconds, but then recognizes her surroundings and calms down.

RED: It's okay. It's- see? C'mon, back to bed.

She lets Red help her back into bed, and immediately falls back to sleep. After a few moments, Red gets the plate and wakes her again.

RED: Very good. Alright, baby bird, mealtime.

NADIA (*half awake*): Tweet tweet.

RED: Compliments of table eight at your favorite outdoor café.

NADIA: I love table eight.

RED: For myself, something from the garden.

RED: Let's see... paint. Paint- nope. Chemical properties... flammability... What can we do with paint?

NADIA returns.

NADIA: You know, it was fruitful.

RED: Those look heavy.

NADIA: Yup, I gotta get em all before the truck gets found.

RED: You think they'll find it?

NADIA: I don't know, better to not risk it, lotta paint on the line.

RED: You've already got a lot of paint here. It's kind of threatening to take over the living quarters.

NADIA: Yup, and it's all red!

RED: So, what's the plan?

NADIA: I don't know.

She exits. RED goes back to his books.

RED (*as before*): Trucks, trucks... Hmm car bombs... a truck is just a big car, isn't it?

He finds what he was looking for. Reads.

RED: Big is good.

NADIA returns.

NADIA: Left the rest outside.

RED: In the truck?

NADIA: No. Just right out here. Keeping the living quarters tidy.

RED: I've researched and can't find any productive use of paint, outside of, well... painting.

NADIA: Of course.

RED: What are we-

NADIA: We're not going to talk about that. First, we're going to talk about breakfast.

RED stops working.

RED: Somnambulism?

NADIA: Yup.

RED: What does Art have to say?

NADIA: Clichés mostly.

RED: Amounting to...?

NADIA: He thinks it's this place and wants us to crash at my mother's house until we find something new.

RED: Of course. What do you think?

NADIA: I'm scared.

RED: Yes. What are you gonna do?

NADIA: It's a catch twenty-two. I know how important staying here is to you, and it's important to me too.

RED: But staying risks losing more, and permanently.

NADIA: Um hmmm...

NARRATOR N: They assume no one would target a room full of cancer patients and philanthropists. No one but our Big Red that is.

RED: Philanthropy is a luxury which does not correlate to anything but the privilege that makes it possible. These people cause all the problems, then solve them on the surface, in order to achieve the amelioration of their guilt. They're not actually trying to improve people's lives.

NARRATOR N: The plan: a timed release of homemade sarin gas into the closed auditorium just as Stuart's acceptance speech goes on.

very top of the lush canopy that tops our city's jungle. It was a brightly decorated box, the lid of which was rigged to ignite a stick of dynamite, wrapped up in layers and layers of shrapnel and electrical tape.

NARRATOR N: The intention was to kill both Pratts, but primarily Stuart. Instead, Red got the most unfortunate result of only killing his Mensche's mother, whom Nadia still loved and hoped to reform... or re-corrupt, that is, to her previous glory.

NARRATOR A: Big Red's plan failed on two grounds, ironically these are also the two reasons Red's mission is necessary: Stuart's generous nature and his ability to influence others.

NARRATOR N: When the gift arrived at the table addressed "to: Stuart Pratt" he generously handed it to Sylvia without hesitation, knowing how she loved surprises and the tearing of wrapping paper. When Silvia opened the box, Stuart's influence saved the day! Silvia, being a reformed anarchist, immediately recognized what she had in her hands and how to best contain the damage it would do. Mrs. Pratt plucked the fizzing bomb with a short fuse from the box and neatly folded her body over it so the blast and shrapnel would be relatively contained and additional casualties prevented.

NARRATOR R: Red is a learning creature and he doesn't give up easily. His second attempt will use Stuart's virtues against him, or at least our recognition of those virtues.

NARRATOR A: A few days hence is Stuart and Arthur's awards banquet where father and son are being honored for developments in the field of cancer research. This presents Red with the first opportunity since his failed bombing to get at Stuart out in public with his security detail somewhat relaxed.

RED: Another night of that risk is unacceptable.

NADIA: Not one more night?

RED: No. All day I had visions of trains in tunnels.

NADIA: Me too. I jumped at every bright light and loud noise.

RED: It's irrational to stay like this.

NADIA: But, it's a sacrifice.

RED: No change in my life circumstances is less sacrifice than losing you would be.

NADIA: Well, *that's* a romantic overstatement.

RED: Perhaps, but it doesn't matter. Sacrifice isn't necessary.

NADIA: Why not?

RED: This isn't only a question of moving. We can't stay here *like this*.

NADIA: Aha! You've got a solution?

RED: I've got *solutions*: band-aids and panaceas, silver bullets and stop-gaps.

NADIA: Excellent! What is the plan?

RED: To pursue them all at once, starting tonight, with a band-aid.

He produces a bracelet with a tether and a collar with a bell.

NADIA: Oh! Red, how ingenious!

She puts on the collar, with his help.

RED: This temporary measure will reduce the risk and buy time while I implement my more radical solution. Now, what is the red paint for?

NADIA: I told you I hadn't any ideas yet.

RED goes back to work on the bomb.

RED: Have one now.

NADIA: We'll... paint the town red.

RED: How's that?

NADIA: Paint everything red. Get an army, each with a bucket and a roller and go at it.

RED: Vandalism?

NADIA: On a *grand* scale.

RED: Property damage.

NADIA: A statement.

RED: We're doing *statements*?

NADIA: No. Conquests! Every building we paint we claim as ours.

RED: You can't paint a whole building, not without scaffolding.

NADIA: Just the bottom parts. But thoroughly, everything arm's-reachable. Imagine the visual.

RED places a Koran in the box, then the bomb.

NADIA: Red.

RED: Yes?

authorities and deliver her illegitimate child, he went on to help clear her name, and eventually married her and fathered her second child, named him Arthur and raised them both like any benevolent altruist would.

NARRATOR N: Thus Sly Ruendelle became Sylvia Pratt, but before this transition was complete, Nadia's name was chosen. Her father being a nameless nomad, Sly had to get creative, and in a decision that Sylvia Pratt would regret the rest of her life, Sly Ruendelle named Nadia after all humanity, *Mensche*. This happened somewhere in East Germany.

NARRATOR A: Stuart Pratt soon finished his medical education with flying colors, and emigrated with his new family to America, where he went on to become the most passionate, kindhearted doctor, and then the president of a giant healthcare conglomerate, where he single-handedly pushed through reforms and improvements in every area, from patient's privacy rights to paper work reductions.

NARRATOR R: Yes, Stuart Pratt, unlike the heroes of our tale is a deeply *good* person, a vigilant meliorist who makes our world a more tolerable place through slow reforms, compassionate conservatism, and steadfast dedication to doing good works. He is a model citizen, a man worthy of emulation. Indeed, so worthy of emulation that his son Arthur has devoted his entire life to following in his footsteps.

NARRATOR A: For the first half of Nadia's life she walked we father's path as well, and even now continues to walk it, in her sleep.

NARRATOR R: Of course, this is why Big Red had to deliver a shiny package to Sylvia and Stuart's table as they began celebrating their anniversary with a fine dinner at a fine restaurant at the

The actor playing Red shifts out of character and begins the narration.

NARRATOR R: Now, you may be wondering if Red's methods aren't perhaps a bit too severe, but that's only because you don't understand the severity of this situation. You do know how important Nadia Mensche is, the fact that every step she takes is a step closer to Utopia for all of us.

NARRATOR A: What you *don't* understand is the reason that Red's means are necessary. Once you get the causal link between progress and the extermination of Mensche's family, none of Red's actions can be called into question, which brings us back to our history lesson.

When we left off, the death of the nameless nomad who would've been Nadia's father had left Sly alone, knocked up, totally insolvent and running from country to country. These hard times were the beginning of the end for Sly Ruendelle.

NARRATOR N: Nothing kills a revolutionary impulse like salvation at the hands of a benevolent altruist. This story's benevolent altruist is a naïve young medical student named Stuart Pratt. He was so benevolent that he couldn't bring himself to walk past an obscenely pregnant woman lying face-down in the gutter one drizzly night in the jungle of the city.

NARRATOR A: At first Stuart tried to take the raving woman directly to the hospital for medical attention, but Sly refused to go. He almost called the authorities to come take her to safety, which is the most that could be asked of any good Samaritan, but somehow the desperation and fear in Sly's eyes convinced him to hesitate.

NARRATOR R: To hesitate and then bring her into his dormitory, where not only did he conceal her from

NADIA: Thank you.

RED: For what?

She jingles the bell.

NADIA: For solving problems.

RED: That's just a band aid. Wait until you see my *solution*.

RED crosses to her, kisses her.

The Actor Playing Nadia snaps out of character and begins the narration.

NARRATOR N: And Big Red does have a solution, one that's already half-finished because it involves the tools of his *project*.

NARRATOR A: But, before we tell you anything more about that, it's time for a brief history of the Pratt / Mensche / Ruendelle family line.

NARRATOR R: Nadia is the offspring of two fine and rare specimens of our ancient revolutionary lineage.

NARRATOR A: Such pairings are increasingly rare today because the upstart gene is no longer favored by natural selection. As society becomes more strictly bureaucratized, conformity and docility offer an ever greater competitive advantage.

NARRATOR R: Rebels are stamped out or put down before they can procreate and pass on the upstart genes to future generations.

NARRATOR N: Or... It is possible there *is* no genetic proclivity for radicalism. Maybe such things escape the grasp of bio-determinism, and this whole construct is just a clever thematic device designed to justify our hero's actions and introduce her unique family history.

NARRATOR A: Well, on to that anyway. Nadia Mensche's mother is currently known to the world as Sylvia Pratt. Before this she was known as Sly Ruendelle, and before that she was only known by a band of gypsies who lured her away from the respectable Ruendelle home at the age of six, where she had been known as Miss Sylvie Marie Ruendelle. This all happened somewhere in the south of France.

NARRATOR R: By the time Sly was ten years old she had left the gypsies and was inspiring the general

RED: Home-made frag grenade, in a box, wrapped in shiny paper. Like a gift.

NADIA: Goddamn it.

RED *holds* NADIA *as she begins to cry.*

RED: It wasn't your truck. Sit.

NADIA: I know it's not my truck, but I-

RED: Mensche... Sit.

NADIA: What happened?

RED: Sit.

NADIA: Did I see Arthur leaving? Where's my paint truck?

RED: Mensche, that truck has nothing to do with it... Sit. Nadia.

NADIA: You fucking tool, you limp dick-

RED: Sit!

NADIA: NO!

RED: You... your mother.

NADIA: Oh, God.

RED: Mensche, I-

NADIA: How?

RED: Sit?

NADIA: Okay.

RED: At dinner, with Stuart-

NADIA: How?

RED: A- A bomb.

NADIA: What bomb?

strike and city wide revolt in Paris known as the Events of May Sixty-Eight. Yes, this ten year old girl with a barrel of gas and the most incendiary of speeches set those events in motion, and many others all over the world! Until the mid-eighties. Everything ended during the eighties.

NARRATOR N: Except one thing. One noteworthy thing- the thing that our story tonight is all about, got started in the eighties. That thing is Nadia Mensche herself. Nadia got started when Sly hooked up with a nameless vagabond nomad. This was somewhere in the western United States. This nomad was completely mute, he never spoke, not with words anyway. He did speak with actions, fiercely articulate actions, like walking out of the desert and into Sly's arms, or murdering the crook who ran a town outside Sly's commune with his bare hands.

NARRATOR R: This nomad loved with a love that could move mountains and hated with a hate that had him hanged by an angry mob by the time he was twenty-two. But, not before he was able to pass on his genetic information, which was so jam-packed full of radical impulse-

NARRATOR N: If such a thing exists.

NARATOR R: That, when combined with Sly's own proclivity to inspired violence, would guarantee, according to the laws of Gregor Mendel, their offspring to follow in this tradition.

NARRATOR A: Supposing that radicalism is a complex polygenic phenotype, Nadia may have inherited two complementary sets of traits one from Sly and one from the father. It's possible that Nadia combines these traits to become an ultra-radical individual, one who has the ability to spark a sweeping mass revolutionary movement reconstituting the entire political economy even

within a civilization as sad, lost, and deadly as ours.

NARRATOR R: Yes! It is possible that Nadia Mensche is this ultimate personification of sudden glorious progress, this agitator of agitators, this messiah for our worthless civilization.

NARRATOR N: It is also possible that Nadia is really no different than the rest of us, that we are all equally capable of such things.

NARRATOR A: Anyway, you now understand the potentially unique nature of Nadia Mensche, which brings us to the nurture part of things: Nadia's home environment.

NARRATOR R: The problematic family she grew up with was so nurturing they built chains of love, support and compassion that continue to restrain this wellspring of revolutionary potential.

NARRATOR A: There's much more to say about that, but first, you must know Big Red's solution. We have to deflate the suspense we've built surrounding that subject and allow you all to maintain an unemotional, critical distance from these characters and this story.

NARRATOR N: We have to give away the fact that Red will make three attempts at his radical solution, and even then, it'll be Nadia who delivers the final blow before Red's plan is complete, and, of course, we have to let you know exactly what Red's radical solution is.

NARRATOR R: To break the chains that bind Mensche to traditional values and bourgeois society, Red intends to simply kill the entire family who creates them.

RED: Are you suggesting that Mensche and I wouldn't fuck other people?

ART: Yes. I'm suggesting that this whole open relationship thing is a sham you've worked up, like the rest of your "purpose" and these people- "Cesar?" are fictitious, like "The Empire".

RED: Are these thoughts perhaps a cover for your own unresolved aberrant desires for Mensche?

ART: Aberrant desires? She's my sister!

RED: Maybe your discomfort with her sexuality- with the very idea of her *having* a sexuality, is indicative of-

ART: My mother just died. I didn't come here to get psychoanalyzed by-

RED: What *did* you come here for?

ART: To talk to Nadia!

RED: Well. She's not here.

ART: Yeah, I can see-

RED: So, why are you?

ART: I- Jesus Christ, Red, I didn't-

ART exits, in a huff. RED goes back to work.

RED: "My mother just died." There's always an excuse.

NADIA enters.

NADIA: My truck is gone.

RED gets up, sets the chair near the cot, sits on the cot.

SCENE 3

RED: Monogamous?

ART: Yeah, unless... You cheating on her?

RED: No. Cheating implies deception, like monogamy implies exclusivity.

ART: But you're messing around?

RED: Me? No, but I could if I wanted to. So could she.

ART: With who?

RED: I don't know, Cesár.

ART: Cesár?

RED: The latin tiger.

ART: No, you, who would *you*? This Dyna person?

RED: Dynamo is just a kid. Anyone. As long as they aren't diseased or bourgeois or something. Same with Menshe.

ART: And she's sleeping with "Cesár"?

RED: Maybe.

ART: She's not.

RED: Maybe not.

ART: She's not.

RED: Maybe she didn't tell you. Didn't want to poke a hole in your-

ART: Whatever. I'm gonna go. You two can play whatever make-believe games you want to.

As the narration ends, the actor playing Red sits at the table. He's no longer working on the frag grenade, instead he's dealing with bottles of chemicals, fertilizer and gasoline, and formulas.

ART knocks on the door.

RED: What's the password?

ART: Biggy?

RED (*opening the door*): Art! How've you been, comrade?

ART is harried and has obviously been crying.

ART: Nadia never told me a password.

RED: That's cuz there isn't one.

ART: But, you asked for-

RED: Our security is based on no one knowing where we are. Password isn't going to keep them out.

ART: Then why did you- forget it. Nadia's not here?

RED: Doesn't look like it.

ART: I need to talk to her, it's urgent.

RED: Okay.

ART: She was supposed to call me.

RED: We don't use phones.

ART: She was gonna call collect.

RED: We don't use phones.

ART: But, she said, since it was for me, her calling me collect wouldn't be her using the phone it'd be- I'd be the one using the phone.

RED: Okay.

ART: But, then she didn't call.

RED: Maybe that's because we don't use phones.

ART: But she *said*.

RED: Maybe she was appeasing you.

ART: She said: The satisfaction of calming her poor brother's nerves would enrich her life enough to balance out this tiny insignificant contribution to the evil telecommunications infrastructure.

RED: Then she should have called. She actually use the word "evil?"

ART: I- I don't know.

RED: Or are you imposing your underdeveloped moral jargon onto her statement?

ART: Red. I don't know. Probably. Listen, this is urgent.

RED: Maybe she hasn't got to the pay phone yet. Maybe she called after you left the house.

ART: I have a cell phone.

RED: Of course you do. Does it get a signal down here?

ART (*checks*): No.

ART begins moving around, holding the phone up to try and get a signal.

RED: We can never understand a thing like this.

ART cries for a while and RED holds him. Eventually, he calms down.

RED: Art. You'll be okay? Just, don't-

ART: Yes.

RED: Mensche went to get some groceries, I'm sure she'll be back soon.

ART: *If* she doesn't get caught.

RED: What?

ART: I know how she gets your groceries.

RED: I don't think you do. There is *no* risk of getting caught.

ART: If you say so.

RED: I- I'm sorry Art, but... I've got to point out, a mistake that you made.

ART: What?

RED: When you called me your "half-brother-in-law."

ART: Yeah?

RED: I'm not.

ART: It's a figure of speech. Besides, you and Nadia- it's a *de facto*-

RED: No. Marriage is the first oppressive institution. Your sister and I would never do that to each other.

ART: But, you've been in a committed monogamous relationship since-

RED: I'm not. I can see why you don't trust or understand me and I admire you for maintaining your relationship with Mensche.

ART: How can you forgive so easily?

RED: There's nothing to forgive.

ART: I just- it's a cruel accusation.

RED: Forgiveness implies judgment, I don't do that. The thoughts are in your head unbidden, why judge? If you'd repressed your suspicions of me, that'd be dishonest, and I wouldn't have an opportunity to reassure you. I should be thankful, not judgmental.

ART: Biggy, I just-I can't believe she's gone.

RED: Such a waste, just... senseless.

ART: I know there have been things, her past- but, I know she's a good woman, I *know* she is.

RED comforts him again.

RED: Have... have you considered that possibility? I mean- if it was an assassination attempt, maybe some reactionary from her past- and- and she was the target.

ART: I don't know, but, whoever it was, whichever one of them was supposed to be- If I find the person who did this...

RED: The bastard.

ART: It's just so... sudden.

RED: How can someone be so destructive?

ART: Why?

RED: That's it then. She called while you were down here.

ART: Damn it.

RED: Maybe you should go back to the surface and see if you've got a voicemail.

ART: Biggy-

RED: Maybe you could stay up there until she gets back-

ART: Red, stop. Don't play around with me, please, not today.

RED: Then I can get some fucking work done.

ART catches a signal, while standing on a chair downstage. He missed a call.

ART: Damn it. Must of been her.

He calls the number back.

RED: See? You should've stayed up where your technology fetters function properly.

ART: Hello? Nadia? Oh... no. No, I'm... sorry, I thought- is there a- oh, no... forget it.

He hangs up.

ART: God *damn* it.

RED: Art... what?

ART: Mother is dead.

RED (*aside*): Not urgent.

ART: What?

RED: Mensche will be back soon... I'm- I'm sorry for your loss Arthur.

ART: Bullshit.

RED: You looked like you wanted me to say it.

ART: God, Biggy, you're a real sociopath.

RED: No I'm not. I like you Art, genuinely. And Sly as well.

ART: Her name was *Sylvia*.

RED: Whatever. She's been an inspiration. I will-

ART: How about my father?

RED: What about him?

ART: The bomb that killed my mother-

RED: Bomb?

ART: Yes, bomb. A bombing.

RED: We haven't had one here yet.

ART: Well, now we have.

RED: Yes... Your father?

ART: He was there with her. He's hurt but not bad. It was a small bomb. They think it was an assassination attempt.

RED: If I was going to kill your father-

ART: I'm not *saying* that.

RED: You asked.

ART: Asked what?

RED: What I think of your father-

ART: What does that-

RED: Then you said he was targeted. It's not hard to get your implication.

ART: I'm not implying-

RED: Art, you *just* called me a sociopath.

ART (*suddenly very passionate*): What if I was? What if I *did* suspect you- my half-brother-in-law killed my mother when attempting to kill my father? What's- It's hardly-

RED: You'd be wrong.

ART: It's- I can't-

RED: Come here. Art, it's okay.

He hugs ART, comforts him.

ART: I just don't know what to- I'm sorry Biggy-

RED: Don't be sorry.

ART: But, that's a really- really shitty thing to think about someone.

RED: But, I understand. My life choices- I can be misinterpreted.

ART: You're so strange.

RED: Living with purpose must be strange to you.

ART: Don't condescend to-