

2. IS THAT LOVE?

***H** and **M** stare each other, then laugh and run around the confessional. When they are hidden, the wedding march changes to Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds – Cannibal’s Hymn. **H** and **M** return in slow motion, **M**’s mouth, face, and hands are full of feathers and blood, **H** is holding a bird’s nest full of eggs. They throw the eggs toward the confession booth in slow motion, and then start to dance which leads into an almost kiss.*

A pause while both hesitate and then step away. The song fades at “sing you songs of happy endings.” Faint sounds of a village return, with occasional singing birds.

M

It seems I ate someone.

H

Who did you eat, silly?

M

I feel like a monster.

H

Describe this monster to me?

M

It's like – I – you know the streetlamp? The streetlamp which switches off when you approach it and then back on as you have passed

H

I see.

M

Do you?

H

I want you to know -

M

It was a nightingale. Or a small nightingale. Chirp-bird. What I ate. What does it matter?

H

Well you seem to care, so -

M

It had big blue eyes and legs who were lost.

H

What else?

M

It was a bird – I –

***THE WOMEN** have been coming back to the stage during this conversation with their trolleys, and at this point, they interrupt. The women may speak at the same time or in turns, repeat lines, be in different rhythms etc.*

THE WOMEN

How is your eldest? Still into nonsense. Oh, she will give up on that when she takes interest in boys. She is a beauty; she won't have any shortage of them.

Giggles.

Look at his toe! Oh, what a wonderful toe that is. And his eyes, they are so blue, like the eyes of his father. And a round little belly! What a wonderful belly! The cutest nose. And what a set of perfect teeth. Boggle goggle moggle wiggle woggle snoggle lovely oh so lovely so lovely oh so lovely moony noony tooney looney eeny meeny tiny teeny moe

***M** runs toward them and grabs **THE WOMEN** from an arm. **H** goes to pick up the torn curtain of the confessional and puts it on as a superhero cape, climbs on top of the confessional and freezes into a superhero pose.*

M

Is that love?

*Silence. **THE WOMEN** look **M** from head to toe.*

You should change to make them love you, that would make them happy

THE HIT-MAN puts down the binoculars, walks over, and THE WOMEN spin M on his arms. H changes his superman-pose and stares at them. THE WOMEN pick up the trolleys and park them inside the booths of the confessional. Then they stare as well.

THE HIT-MAN

Did it hurt when you fell down from heaven, angel?

M falls on THE HIT-MAN's arms. The Cannibal's Hymn starts again from where it ended ("swoop down to tell you it don't make much sense"). They dance. After a while, M pulls THE HIT-MAN's heart out of his chest, watching it beat.

M

Is this love?

M stares at the heart. THE HIT-MAN stares at M.

THE HIT-MAN

The common crackle sounds like a swinging gate, but the ones wearing short dresses are the easy targets. If they groan because they are cold, I offer them my coat.

Albatross yells. The song ends. THE HIT-MAN takes his gun water-gun, aims and shoots. Occasional birds and sounds of village return

An albatross falls on the stage. All pause. Everybody stares at the albatross and M holding a bleeding heart. There is a small earthquake, snow falls, they look around.

THE HIT-MAN returns to the bar with an empty pint, drinks it as if there was something inside. THE WOMEN return to the trolleys but can only get one trolley out of the confession booth, so they drag it out and push it around together. H climbs down and gets back inside the confessional and tries to attach the cape as a curtain again. H gets out of the confessional.

THE WOMEN

Good day, sir!

H

Madam, day good!

THE WOMEN

Sir!

H turns around and tries to get into the side of the confessional where the trolley is stuck.

H

Madam!

Madam! Day good!

***THE HIT-MAN** leaves his chair and takes two very steady steps while hiccupping. Turns around, returns to the chair, drinks another empty pint. **H** climbs on top of the confessional. **THE WOMEN** make sounds like ick and boo to the trolley. **H** gets down from the confessional.*

***M** crushes the heart.*

*The consecutive lines of each character blend into each other, endings and beginnings overlapping. Behind the dialogue, sounds of birds gradually rise higher and higher until they are almost too loud when **M** shouts “nightingales”. She is pointing out birds, not shouting profanities, so there should be sounds of tits, swallows and nightingales included within the sounds.*

THE WOMEN

I am so mad at him. He could at least pretend he tries. It's like he doesn't even care. He doesn't care! He wants me to give up and divorce him! I am so mad at him. I should know better. Find a better man, I should, there are no men that would care, they all avoid responsibilities -

THE HIT-MAN

You can tell her that you and she would never get along, because of your personality differences – you are more confident than her and that would probably make her feel inferior. Then let her get angry and tell her that maybe your presence actually boosts her confidence.

M

SWALLOWS

THE WOMEN

To be a man! That would be something. Your socks on the floor!

THE HIT-MAN

Pick up the ones who are like pigeons but prettier to make her jealous, the swans are so boring, they mate for life –

THE INVISIBLE GENTLEMAN

Well I work in mysterious ways, that's all. I'm a rock'n'roll star -

THE WOMEN

You lift them if they bother you! They've been there for a week! Well I said I will pick them up, didn't I? What's the rush? Well we have guests coming! They are your guests, not mine – well don't we share this household? So, you can lift my socks. Oh, so clever, I see what you did there.

H

Nobody loves me!

M

TITS!

THE HIT-MAN

Those who puff are often overweight, flatter them by telling how their curves are hot – that will make them admire you, you will get laid

THE WOMEN

we will make him realize, he is so self-involved, I'm not self-involved so I can see these things, I have empathy, sympathy and caring and sharing and I am so mad at him. He doesn't communicate, he doesn't talk, he just sits around the house and farts.

M

NIGHTINGALES!

Everything falls silent.

A pause.

M

Is that love?

A pause

Their lines overlap again, the sounds of village and birds return.

THE WOMEN

Who knows what is love?

H

A fleeting moment!

THE HIT-MAN

Why do you keep asking? The common household birds are targets for wife material, they can cook meat and make vegetarians, I have sworn I will never be vulnerable again

THE WOMEN

He is never going to find a woman like me. My suffer doesn't self-esteem if you think that's what this is! I am just horny because losing he

THE HIT-MAN

Wife material sounds are common in the household, kitchen, tea pot, pffft pfft pffft pffft pfffffffffft

M

Is that love?

WOMEN, H, THE HIT-MAN

Stop asking that question!

... scene continues