

Seven Fairytales of Shame

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English translation:

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Cast

Agla

The Psychiatrist

Amma Malla / Margret

Edda / Inga Briem

Fridgeir / Vilhelm Briem / Bartender

Hanna

Cop #1

Cop #2 / Grandpa Bill

Fanney

Eyglo / Reporter

The Icelandic Princesses and their husbands / Young Agla / Colleen – puppets

Grandpa Benni / Young Edda – voices

– indicates an interruption.

Act One

The Psychiatrist's office – the Psychiatrist is trying to convince Margret, his patient of several decades, that they must interrupt her treatment so that the Psychiatrist can develop his method to analyse and eradicate shame. Margret is having none of it.

PSYCHIATRIST: Just imagine, my very own method... don't you like the sound of that?

MARGRET: Oh, I'm not so sure.

PSYCHIATRIST: Based on, you know, our work together, for one thing, and other things I've gleaned to finalize my new method to cure it.

MARGRET: Cure what "it"??

PSYCHIATRIST: Shame.

MARGRET: Ah, "it." Does shame really need a cure? Can't you just negotiate with it?

PSYCHIATRIST: I'd take a leave, contact my university back in New York maybe, get an office over there, I don't know!

MARGRET: So I'd have to call you in New York on Mondays?

PSYCHIATRIST: Look, Margret, you're not listening to what I'm saying. We would both take a leave... from each other...

MARGRET: Then who would you talk to on Mondays? I'll just call –

PSYCHIATRIST: No, Margret, then it wouldn't exactly be a leave for me.

MARGRET: Call New York. But would I need to speak English on the phone? My Danish is much better. I'll speak to you in Danish on the phone instead: Hvorfor i helvede er du i New York, din dumme lille lort?

PSYCHIATRIST: Margret, you need to find another psychiatrist.

Silence.

MARGRET: What does it mean when your foot is itchy?

PSYCHIATRIST: It means you need to scratch it...

MARGRET: But what if the itch is incurable?

PSYCHIATRIST: Then you scratch harder, Margret.

MARGRET: You could certainly always amputate. Eliminate.

PSYCHIATRIST: Or buy steroid cream for the itch.

MARGRET: Oh, I'm not so sure. Never enough amputations, that's what we nurses always said – cream on a rotten foot, just take it off, much cleaner.

PSYCHIATRIST: But we've been over this, Margret, we had an agreement that you would... keep all your limbs intact even if I went away, took a little vacation...

MARGRET: You know, the fingers I amputated never ever get itchy. (*Margret shows him her bare, fingerless knuckles*) Not one bit.

PSYCHIATRIST: No, but now the itch has moved to your foot.

MARGRET: Just amputate that as well. Anaesthetise and no more stress, no more worry.

PSYCHIATRIST: You can always sit with the itch, Margret, befriend it, let it spark your curiosity, Margret, what colour is the itch, how does it move around, how does it –

MARGRET: I can tell you've never had an itchy foot. When do you go to New York?

PSYCHIATRIST: When I know how my method works.

MARGRET: If it works.

PSYCHIATRIST: If it works.

MARGRET: Right, so not for ages...

PSYCHIATRIST: Look, Margret, I –

Agla tears open the door and stands frozen in the doorway. She is in her thirties and wears a police uniform.

MARGRET: No, no, no, my husband died of natural causes, no point arresting me, he poisoned himself with sausages and cigarettes and maybe a little bit of rat poison, I don't know a thing about it!

AGLA: I'm not here for you.

MARGRET: Ahh, here for him, of course, he's planning an escape to New York.

AGLA: I'm not here for him.

MARGRET: I see... so you've got an itchy foot.

AGLA: (*to Psychiatrist*) Can you get this woman out of here?

MARGRET: Well well, she's on the attack. Nothing but disrespect for the working classes in this country...

PSYCHIATRIST: Margret here has a session with me right now.

AGLA: Get the fuck out, old lady.

PSYCHIATRIST: People need to make appointments here, they can't just barge in.

AGLA: Okay, this won't take a second, you both just stay there, I need –

MARGRET: A saw? (*Margret and the Psychiatrist stand up*).

PSYCHIATRIST: No saws, Margret, we had an agreement –

MARGRET: I'll buy a saw for us.

PSYCHIATRIST: (*to Agla*) You need to leave.

AGLA: *(to Psychiatrist)* Sit your ass down!

MARGRET: *(to Psychiatrist)* I like this one.

Margret waltzes out calmly. Agla slams the door behind her and takes her place at a distance from the Psychiatrist.

AGLA: So how does this thing work?

PSYCHIATRIST: It doesn't work at all, you need to make an appointment.

AGLA: But if I made an appointment and I was here, what would you say? You have an opening line?

PSYCHIATRIST: I'd open with: Why is there a cop in uniform standing in my office?

AGLA: Yeah, sorry, I'm not working right now.

PSYCHIATRIST: Then why are you wearing those clothes?

AGLA: It doesn't matter. How does it work, you know, this thing?

PSYCHIATRIST: The way it works is that you need to make an appointment.

AGLA: And then what?

PSYCHIATRIST: Hey, buddy.

AGLA: Please. And then what?

PSYCHIATRIST: Well, I would ask: How can I help you?

AGLA: I don't want you to help me.

PSYCHIATRIST: Alright, then, this was a quick session.

AGLA: I want you to take care of me.

Pause.

PSYCHIATRIST: And what if I have no interest in taking care of you?

AGLA: Then we're going to have to find a way to spark your interest.

Agla locks the door, puts on leather gloves and moves in closer.

PSYCHIATRIST: Ritalin? Amphetamine?

AGLA: I'm not a junkie.

PSYCHIATRIST: Sure, sure, just a tired cop.

AGLA: Bingo. You feeling interested now?

PSYCHIATRIST: No. I'm not going to take care of you and now I don't even want to help you.

Agla attacks the Psychiatrist, pulls him down to the floor and strangles him. The Psychiatrist is almost unconscious when Agla finally lets go. The Psychiatrist gasps for air.

AGLA: *(takes out a notepad and reads from it)* Zyprexa 20mg, it's a yellow tablet that dissolves in your mouth. Or you give me Cisordinol Acutard which is an injectable – you would need to give me the shot and then I have about ten minutes to get home before I fall asleep.

PSYCHIATRIST: *(coughing)* Not that I want to help you, but you've got your drugs mixed up.

AGLA: No.

PSYCHIATRIST: You want 20mg of Zyprexa or Cisordinol Acutard?

AGLA: Yes.

The Psychiatrist stands up.

PSYCHIATRIST: No one wants Zyprexa. It's a pill that dissolves and enters the bloodstream instantly so the patient doesn't have a chance to spit it back in your face. Cisordinol Acutard is an injection, they restrain you to administer it, it's a forced injection that puts you to sleep for several days. Nobody asks for Zyprexa, sweetie, let alone Cisordinol. You're either looking for Ritalin or one of your friends is teasing you, gave you the wrong drug name. Did you think they were the same?

AGLA: No, I'm asking you for those drugs right now.

PSYCHIATRIST: Look, they knock you out, not a chance you can kill yourself with either of them and they're impossible to abuse. They're just about the only effective medicines apart from LSD, of course, and exercise.

A knock on the door.

COP #1: Open the door!

AGLA: Did you call?

PSYCHIATRIST: No, I was busy, I was being strangled.

COP #2: *(outside)* Open the fucking door or I break it down.

AGLA: That lady called the cops?

PSYCHIATRIST: She can't make a call, she doesn't have any fingers!

Two police officers break down the door. They enter and the atmosphere is very awkward.

COP #1: *(nods his head at Agla)* Officer.

AGLA: Officer.

COP #2: Officer.

PSYCHIATRIST: Listen, your fellow officer here almost killed me!

COP #1: Sorry to uhh hear that, sir.

COP #2: Yeah, that's your side of the story.

PSYCHIATRIST: My side?

AGLA: How'd you get here so fast?

COP #1: Well we were in the neighborhood, officer, to get some ice cream, maybe a sundae or something, and then we get a call from the station and –

AGLA: What kind of bullshit is that?

COP #2: We're following you. Sorry. We were right outside the scene, there was no call. We're supposed to keep an eye on you today.

COP #1: You ran out of the station earlier after your talk with the chief and she wanted us to like... escort you.

AGLA: Tail me.

COP #1: (*to Psychiatrist*) Agla here, you see, she was...

AGLA: I got fired earlier.

COP #1: Yes, right, and she got sort of... negative, wasn't too happy about it.

AGLA: Naturally.

COP #2: Naturally.

COP #1: Naturally, officer! And the chief, she got a little worried about Agla and wanted us to accompany her for a bit...

PSYCHIATRIST: Yes, just in case she started strangling psychiatrists.

COP #1: For example, great example there, sir.

PSYCHIATRIST: So one of you can take her away and the other can take my statement and then I'm going to press charges.

COP #1: Right you are, press charges, you know your stuff, educated guy, good for you... but...

COP #2: (*to Psychiatrist*) That's not what's going to happen. No charges. You're just going to forget about this.

PSYCHIATRIST: I presume your chief would want me to press charges!

COP #1: Wow, you make some very strong points there, sir, but actually... see...

AGLA: The chief and I, we're related. I got fired by a member of my family. Just now.

COP #1: And with that comes a kind of embarrassment perhaps or shame you might say, something we officers of the law would p-p-prefer to avoid.

Silence.

COP #2: (*to Psychiatrist*) Can't you do something for her? She's acting like a retard.

AGLA: Up yours.

PSYCHIATRIST: You'll refrain from trying to kill me?

COP #1: Yeah, how about that, end on a good note, right buddy?

COP #2: I went to this anxiety workshop and it was insane.

Agla shakes her head, sits on the chair and does not reply. The cops fuss around with the door and then exit. Agla and the Psychiatrist remain.

AGLA: Why psychiatry?

PSYCHIATRIST: People said that in psychiatry I would interact with intelligent people, profound thinkers.

AGLA: But it turned out everyone was more like Margret?

PSYCHIATRIST: Yes, the first thing you learn in psychiatry is that people are liars.

AGLA: When I was lying on top of you earlier, I felt something.

PSYCHIATRIST: (*sincere*) What did you feel?

AGLA: Alcohol on your breath.

PSYCHIATRIST: I see.

AGLA: Not like you had one too many yesterday, but a fresh smell, new.

PSYCHIATRIST: I hear what you're saying.

AGLA: You drive home in that state?

PSYCHIATRIST: Yes, but now I know a girl who used to be a cop and owes me a favour.
Couldn't you take care of me?

AGLA: I'm not a girl.

PSYCHIATRIST: Is it important to you that I don't see you as a girl?

AGLA: It's not about seeing anything, I'm a grown woman.

PSYCHIATRIST: Is it all about protecting that little girl?

AGLA: Really liked getting strangled, didn't you?

PSYCHIATRIST: Certainly spiced up a long workday.

AGLA: I could go even further...

PSYCHIATRIST: I know that. And so do those other officers. I'm sure you sense they're still standing out there, ready to intervene.

AGLA: (*reading from the notepad*) Cisordinol Acutard or Zyprexa 20mg. What do I have to do for you?

PSYCHIATRIST: I could use a coffee.

AGLA: No, you don't want coffee.

PSYCHIATRIST: Okay, what is it I want?

AGLA: You want a drink, I mean, you just got strangled.

PSYCHIATRIST: There is no alcohol in here.

AGLA: People are liars...

PSYCHIATRIST: And where do I keep the alcohol?

AGLA: *(stands and begins examining the office, investigating it)* When you started out, you had some flair. You kept whisky on a side table and three glasses – nothing to hide. A young, edgy psychiatrist. Then you moved the whisky inside the cupboard, just because... then into the drawer, just because... A few years ago you switched to vodka, not just because, but because vodka doesn't smell. And it's not the kind of drink you keep on a side table. Is this a bathroom?

PSYCHIATRIST: My bathroom, not for patients.

Agla barges into the bathroom and emerges with a bottle of vodka.

AGLA: Under the sink, next to the toilet brush. Next step will be moving it inside the tank of the toilet, you'll think to yourself: "Stays cold that way, it's almost like a hotel minibar isn't it? Teehee." And the "teehee" sounds – as my mother would put it – timid.

PSYCHIATRIST: But that's not how you are.

AGLA: What?

PSYCHIATRIST: Timid.

AGLA: You think so?

Agla pours vodka into a cup and the Psychiatrist knocks it back. He turns on Gnossienne 1 by Erik Satie.

PSYCHIATRIST: You listen to Erik Satie?

AGLA: Does he play on Kiss FM?

PSYCHIATRIST: No.

AGLA: Then I don't listen to Erik Satie.

PSYCHIATRIST: Cisordinol Acutard, Zyprexa 20mg. They would put you to sleep.

AGLA: Yes.

PSYCHIATRIST: You want me to put you to sleep?

AGLA: Yes.

PSYCHIATRIST: You know you'll wake up again, no chance of those meds killing you, you would sleep like –

AGLA: Sleeping Beauty.

PSYCHIATRIST: And that's going to take care of you?

AGLA: Yes.

PSYCHIATRIST: How's that?

AGLA: Lights out for a while.

PSYCHIATRIST: And you want nothing else?

AGLA: No, just a little rest.

Pause.

PSYCHIATRIST: Have you read Genesis?

AGLA: No, I wrote it...

Gnossienne I fades out.

PSYCHIATRIST: But you're familiar with the story of Adam and Eve and the tree of knowledge?

AGLA: Yes, so there's no need to explain it to me.

PSYCHIATRIST: They are forbidden to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge, but they do it anyway. Eat the apple. But not because they're greedy. They do it because they're curious.

AGLA: After all, it is an apple from the tree of knowledge, not from a plastic bag in the supermarket.

PSYCHIATRIST: So you would have done the same. You want to understand.

AGLA: No, I want to fall asleep.

PSYCHIATRIST: Adam and Eve had always been naked, but when they took a bite from the tree of knowledge they understood that they were naked. But instead of enjoying that understanding of their nakedness, they wanted to hide it, started covering themselves up. What is being born here?

AGLA: Is this a riddle?

PSYCHIATRIST: What is born there in the book of Genesis?

AGLA: Shame.

PSYCHIATRIST: Shame. And shame is a miserable master. How pointless it was: They've been naked together their entire lives, and suddenly they start wearing clothes.

AGLA: Maybe it was cold in the garden of Eden.

PSYCHIATRIST: Maybe. But remember, the apple came from the tree of knowledge. Adam and Eve suddenly understood that to make something exciting, it's a neat idea to hide it away. Maybe shame is just a game, hide and seek? They both know what's underneath the cover. Maybe it's not so serious.

AGLA: But what if it's very serious?

PSYCHIATRIST: Then tell me about it!

Margret peeks in through the door.

MARGRET: *(to Agla)* Two-for-one deal on saws at the hardware store.

PSYCHIATRIST: Hold on a minute, Maggie.

MARGRET: But I only need one. Want the other?

AGLA: No, no, I'm good.

MARGRET: Then why do you think you're so bad?

Margret walks out and closes the door behind her.

PSYCHIATRIST: *(calling her)* Maggie! *(to Agla)* Margret needs everyone to be concerned about her. She can't tell the difference between care and concern. If I get sick or cancel a session, she chops off a finger. She would be happiest as a torso on a stretcher, getting around the clock care from a crowd of doctors and nurses – being stroked and combed and pitied.

AGLA: So why would she give her session away to me?

PSYCHIATRIST: Because she's recovering, even though she doesn't like it.

AGLA: More vodka?

PSYCHIATRIST: I need grounds to prescribe such strong sedatives –

AGLA: Why don't you go out there and tell them I'm, like, dangerous?

PSYCHIATRIST: Because I'm not so sure that you are. Adam and Eve used rags to cover up their shame, you use your uniform. But that's all a police uniform is.

AGLA: What?

PSYCHIATRIST: A cover.

Pause.

AGLA: You know, my parents, my mom and dad, they literally died of shame.

PSYCHIATRIST: You want to tell me that story?

AGLA: No, but it looks like I have to tell you to get those goddamn meds.

PSYCHIATRIST: Tell me how?

AGLA: How they died of shame?

PSYCHIATRIST: How did they die of shame?

Agla sits on a chair, takes a deep breath and closes her eyes.

A card appears on the stage with the following information for the audience:

Fairytale #1

How the general practitioner died of shame
and the role his wife, Inga Briem, played in the matter.

Inga Briem appears in her and Vilhelm's bungalow in Kópavogur. Dr. Vilhelm Briem, G.P. creeps into the room carrying two bags full of groceries. Inga Briem is intently focused on her computer,

AGLA: Vilhelm sneaks into the room, hoping as always that just this once, Inga Briem will not notice he is home from work.

INGA BRIEM: *(without looking at Vilhelm)* It says here, Vilhelm, that the area is up & coming – up & coming... full of Muslims, I'm sure; very dangerous, Vilhelm, up & coming neighbourhoods? Didn't you stay in, the other day you stayed in an area of Malmö that was up & coming?

VILHELM: I prefer to stay in neighbourhoods that are down & dying – carpeted hotels, restaurants that serve Cordon Bleu, Schnitzel, Irish Coffee and –

INGA BRIEM: Well then you can book it!

VILHELM: When the kids get here –

INGA BRIEM: They should be here already, they are always late, Vilhelm, they –

VILHELM: Then I'll ask them to put the thingy on the computer, you know –

INGA BRIEM: Netflix?

VILHELM: Yes, Netflix, put that on there. Then instead of packing shorts and one pair of trousers and one fancy shirt just in case and taking a taxi to the bus terminal and the bus from there and trying to order a small beer in German and worrying about swollen feet and blisters and sunburn on your chest, Inga, in an up & coming area of Berlin, we can just watch a film that takes place in an up & coming area of Berlin instead.

INGA BRIEM: So we've given up travelling too, is that it, Vilhelm?

VILHELM: Mmmm.

INGA BRIEM: So we've given it all up for good, Vilhelm. Might as well give away our organs.

VILHELM: Now now, it's not that we've given up...

INGA BRIEM: Get your pathetic, clammy, cold fingers off me, Vilhelm –

VILHELM: Inga, you sadist.

The fairytale of Inga and Vilhelm Briem pauses for a moment as the Psychiatrist interjects:

PSYCHIATRIST: This isn't exactly grounds for me to administer Cisordinol Acutard, Agla.

AGLA: Give it a minute, it's coming now.

The fairytale resumes. Inga Briem thrusts the computer in Vilhelm's face.

INGA BRIEM: Look, this is an up & coming area, Vilhelm, they serve red wine in jars and vegan kebabs and young Muslim boys will thrust their cocks against me on the subway and I can learn how to use the subway, I'm so good at learning how to use the subway, Vilhelm! I always know which way is north! North is up, Vilhelm, north is up & coming.

VILHELM: The only patients I saw today were young boys and their cocks.

INGA BRIEM: Did you... cure them?

Brief silence.

VILHELM: No.

INGA BRIEM: Are they dead?

VILHELM: No. They all had colds. How does one cure a cold, Inga Briem?

INGA BRIEM: Can't be done.

VILHELM: Can't be done.

INGA BRIEM: One more day that Dr. Vilhelm doesn't help a soul. Help me make this booking.

VILHELM: It sounds like you've already done it. Up & coming area of Berlin.

INGA BRIEM: Red wine in jars, I'll wear a pretty sundress –

VILHELM: Up & coming. How big are the jars?

INGA BRIEM: Just jam jars, I never would have thought of something like that, how amusing.

VILHELM: That's a very small portion. A fair portion is 180ml. A jam jar is smaller than that, Inga. And the wine doesn't get to breathe inside a jar.

INGA BRIEM: No more than I do, Vilhelm!

VILHELM: What do you want me to do about that?

INGA BRIEM: *(throws the laptop on the ground)* Just something, Vilhelm, just do something, do you know what I would give to be shocked for once?

AGLA: And there it was, the moment my father, Dr. Vilhelm Briem, had been waiting for twenty years. Finally he could tell Inga Briem.

PSYCHIATRIST: ...your mother.

AGLA: Yes, my father could tell my mother.

PSYCHIATRIST: Tell her what?

VILHELM: *(to the audience)* I got the idea... it was on a sketch comedy show. Someone made a crack that you should beat your wife with a sack of oranges, because it would be extremely painful, but it wouldn't leave a bruise or break a bone – no one would see, you know, any evidence of it.

AGLA: It was in Sweden of all places that Vilhelm first paid a matronly woman to beat him senseless with a sack of oranges. In a fit of nerves Vilhelm bought blood oranges instead of regular oranges and was convinced the blood oranges would explode during the beating and stain the hotel carpet, leaving him with a fine.

VILHELM: The Swedes are very strict. I convinced myself I'd messed it all up.

AGLA: Dad always feels like he's messed it all up.

VILHELM: But the woman who came to... beat me, she was kind enough to offer to do it in the bathroom instead. Not a penny's worth of fines incurred!

AGLA: After Vilhelm died we looked through his phone and we found out that each and every woman he paid to beat him was the spitting image of Inga Briem.

VILHELM: Inga, I would like to... propose something...

AGLA: To force Inga Briem to transform the violence she inflicted on him from emotional into physical form. He was tired and truth be told too frail for the oranges. He thought about using clementines instead but his ultimate fantasy was for Inga Briem to asphyxiate him. She, on the other hand, spent her days arguing with customer service representatives. She got a special thrill from buying and returning Icelandic design. So, her husband's perversions would either make Inga Briem ecstatic, at least bringing some relief from her boredom and anger. Or she would lose her mind. And Vilhelm Briem took that chance, all in.

Vilhelm takes his hands out of his pockets and reaches out to Inga.

INGA BRIEM: Away with those lousy little fingers!

Vilhelm picks up the shopping bags.

INGA BRIEM: I am dying of boredom, Vilhelm, I tried to run over the cat this morning, Vilhelm, just so I'd have something on my conscience, Vilhelm, something that isn't Netflix and clammy fingers and stories about your patients who aren't sick enough for you! Shock me!

Vilhelm empties the contents of the bags onto the floor.

INGA BRIEM: Are you trying to kill me, Vilhelm, with this buffoonery?

Vilhelm pulls down his trousers and puts the shopping bag over his head.

VILHELM: Before I suffocate, Inga darling, you take the bag off my head, but not until I finish.

Vilhelm starts masturbating and breathing heavily.

INGA BRIEM: What is the matter with you, Vilhelm?

Inga Briem snatches the bag off Vilhelm's head.

VILHELM: There's nothing the matter with me, Inga Briem! This is what I am! I am not delicate, I am rough!

INGA BRIEM: And I'm just supposed to sit and watch you and then save your life? What about me?

VILHELM: You are a sadist, Inga Briem!

INGA BRIEM: I'm supposed to save you, fat chance, fingers covered in semen, yuck. (*Inga hesitates, thinks it over*) Vilhelm, we're going to compete! To see: Which one of us can keep the bag on the longest? And we can't take the bag off each other. Whoever wins gets to decide whether we watch a movie about an up & coming area of Berlin or if we spend a week there.

VILHELM: I think I'm happy, Inga.

INGA BRIEM: Don't get sentimental.

VILHELM: But I'm experienced, Inga.

INGA BRIEM: Then I guess you'll win.

Inga Briem pulls down her trousers and takes the other shopping bag. She hands Vilhelm his bag. They sit opposite one another, put the bags over their heads, their oxygen depletes as they vigorously masturbate. They say nothing and in a moment Inga Briem passes out. Vilhelm continues masturbating as he yells through the plastic:

VILHJALM: Just give up! We'll go to the goddamn up & coming area. Inga! Take off the bag! (*Inga Briem collapses to the floor. Vilhelm keeps masturbating*) Take off the damn bag! Give it up!

AGLA: (*narrating what is taking place on stage*) Vilhelm takes the bag off his head and catches his breath. He can't stand up. Exhausted, he crawls over to Inga Briem. He pulls the bag off Inga's head and sees that she's had a heart attack and is dead. He tries to stand up, but collapses beside Inga Briem. For the first time in his life, Dr. Vilhelm pauses to reflect and he chuckles. Vilhelm kisses Inga Briem and immediately puts her

bag over his head. Dr. Vilhelm breathes hard, harder and faster until his breath starts slowing down. He sinks into the arms of his wife. His breath continues to slow, until he is no longer breathing and lies dead on Inga Briem's lap.

End of Fairytale #1. Agla opens her eyes and returns to herself. The Psychiatrist is pensive.

PSYCHIATRIST: Something about this description of the last seconds of Dr. Vilhelm's life – how the shopping bag envelops his delicate skull, how he collapses freely into Inga Briem's flesh, you feel like he's not ashamed anymore.

AGLA: But look, the whole neighbourhood heard about it. I was so humiliated that I started to experience tension and insomnia and like you pointed out with the Adam and Eve story, I felt shame. And I think that maybe with the help of some strong meds, a good night's sleep, some quality rest, I could wake up with a clear head and get a handle on things. Bury Mom and Dad.

Brief silence.

PSYCHIATRIST: One remarkable thing. When you speak about Vilhelm and Inga Briem –

AGLA: Yes.

PSYCHIATRIST: Your tone changes, your cadence too, more formal, but at the same time you express yourself better – almost tenderly, a hint of empathy you've hidden until now.

AGLA: Yes, I sort of go into cop mode, like a defence mechanism?

PSYCHIATRIST: Or you see the world as a sequence of stories? I underestimated stories for a long time... I –

AGLA: Yeah, a police report is always a matter of understanding people, making sense of how things happen and why.

PSYCHIATRIST: I studied in New York and... I've been developing a certain method...

AGLA: I'm sure it's very effective, but now I want to get back to the drugs.

PSYCHIATRIST: (*standing up, annoyed*) Would you stop this fucking bullshit, Agla!

Brief silence.

AGLA: What are you talking about?

PSYCHIATRIST: Dr. Vilhelm is not your father. Inga Briem is not your mother. These are not your parents! First of all, the children of doctors don't become cops.

AGLA: It's no wonder your patients chop off their hands and feet with this attitude –

PSYCHIATRIST: And your real parents don't love each other this deeply either. You wouldn't be in this predicament if Inga Briem was your mother and Vilhelm was your father.

AGLA: This disgusting pair?

PSYCHIATRIST: I don't see anything disgusting about this story. I see two people who have decided to love one another through the –

AGLA: Through the bag on their head?

PSYCHIATRIST: Let me guess, you were the one who discovered Inga and Vilhelm, you were first on the scene. (*Thinks*) One thing I don't get. The police have their own psychiatrist, you can see him anonymously and he sends the bill to the department of justice. The police psychiatrist won't say anything unless you... did you break any laws?

AGLA: No.

PSYCHIATRIST: Then why won't you go to the police psychiatrist?

AGLA: Why won't you just help me?

PSYCHIATRIST: You want to break the law?

AGLA: No. Don't want to.

PSYCHIATRIST: Need to?

AGLA: Just know I will.

PSYCHIATRIST: Soon?

AGLA: Today. Unless I sleep.

PSYCHIATRIST: You've planned out the crime?

AGLA: Yes, it's all I can think about.

PSYCHIATRIST: Everyone has violent fantasies sometimes, that's only natural.

AGLA: Yes, but I've been snapping. I black out, come to a few minutes later, and I've just kicked the crap out of some individual. And it's only right afterwards that I feel a tiny sense of –

PSYCHIATRIST: Control.

AGLA: No, calm.

PSYCHIATRIST: Would you consider yourself dangerous?

AGLA: Yes, and that's enough from you.

PSYCHIATRIST: To whom? (*Agla does not respond*). Not your fellow officers, you're on leave. Hmm. Not to yourself. A partner. Who is... based on your behaviour... probably female.

AGLA: Stop being such an idiot!

PSYCHIATRIST: What are you going to do to your partner?

AGLA: Now you've got plenty of reasons to take care of me.

PSYCHIATRIST: What are you going to do?

AGLA: Stop being an idiot!

PSYCHIATRIST: Harm her?

AGLA: Stop, stop, stop torturing me!

PSYCHIATRIST: Sounds like it's you who will be doing the torturing –

Agla attacks the Psychiatrist again, grabs him by the throat, even more violently than before, and she has nearly finished him off when the two cops barge back into the room, pull Agla off the Psychiatrist and drag her away.

PSYCHIATRIST: Hold on. *(One of the cops helps the Psychiatrist to his feet. He reaches into a cupboard and pulls out a syringe.)* Cisordinol Acutard, you'll have to get her home, watch her for the next forty-eight hours, she's going to sleep the whole time, you have to watch her and take her vitals. *(To Agla)* Pull your pants down, girl. *(Agla unbuttons her pants)* Underwear too.

Agla pulls down her underwear and the Psychiatrist fills up the syringe.

AGLA: But –

PSYCHIATRIST: *(to the cops)* She'll fall asleep instantly guys, you will have to carry her.

AGLA: Wait a second!

The Psychiatrist moves closer to Agla.

PSYCHIATRIST: You'll feel a little prick.

AGLA: No!

PSYCHIATRIST: Restrain her!

The cops hold Agla down and the Psychiatrist is just about to inject her with Cisordinol Acutard.

AGLA: What's the deal with this fucking method of yours?

Pause.

PSYCHIATRIST: I think a little sleep will do you good...

COP #1: Been a long day of strangling people and so on...

AGLA: What's your method called? I haven't heard of it before.

COP #2: Me neither.

COP #1: I never hear anything.

PSYCHIATRIST: And that's because there is a certain clique within the psychiatric field that looks down on my methods and believes in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, which is nothing but the rectum of liberalism, a cheap fix for the brain-dead, whereas my method if I only had a position to research it –

AGLA: Could it help me? I got a diagnosis when –

PSYCHIATRIST: You don't need a fucking diagnosis.

AGLA: So there's nothing wrong with me?

PSYCHIATRIST: Sure there is, you're unhinged. But that's because you have yet to diagnose the stories you carry with you. When I was studying, we believed in C.B.T. and most of all in medication. But today, I know neither of them work. We are all controlled by, this is my hypothesis, by a number of narratives or fairytales. They sit in the subconscious mind and control everything without our knowledge. These are situations, not necessarily serious ones, in which we have abandoned ourselves, not in the right time or place. We have avoided going through the situation by going around it or outside of it – fled by any means and left our selves behind.

The Psychiatrist puts down the syringe. Again, Gnossienne 1 begins to play.

A card appears on the stage with the following information for the audience:

Fairytale #2

Agla and the Intruder

AGLA: Once upon a time there was a little girl who thought she was big and no wonder – she was trapped in the body of a grown woman, a policewoman. She knew M.M.A., boxing, kickboxing and wrestling and she made all the right choices so she would never in her life need to be afraid. Exactly eighteen months ago the little girl inside the body of a policewoman was taking a shower when she heard a scream coming from the hallway. She hurried out into the hall and her girlfriend was there, scared shitless. A young man had broken in, in broad daylight, thinking we weren't home and started grabbing money, jewellery and our passports. The girlfriend ran outside and I was going to attack the kid, charge at him and kick him to the ground. But my right foot wouldn't move. I tried to move my left foot but it wouldn't budge either. I thought

about throwing a statue at him, but the hands that were covering my crotch and my breasts wouldn't... I didn't want to be seen. And the young man ransacked the apartment. He didn't even have to do it quickly because I just stood still. The little girl inside was howling, screaming and kicking, but the policewoman's body was frozen. When the young man had bagged up everything he came up to me. He recognized me, I had arrested him before. He asked me if everything was alright and finally if I wouldn't mind... He took out his penis, which was a very beautiful shape and almost golden and he masturbated. The policewoman even smiled. She would have offered to give him a hand if she could only have spoken, miserable cow. Then he rushed out.

And I stood there until I heard my girlfriend come back inside. Then I cleaned up his semen and got dressed. And she knew what had happened, but she didn't say a word. And I didn't say anything either. She was so sure that I could fend for myself, naked in the shower, so she ran away. Because I'm so strong, I can take care of myself. But I couldn't and I needed help and now it's all coming down, I fucking hate my girlfriend, even though I never even told her how it happened and, after I was fired earlier on, I just felt it: Today I'm going to kill Hanna. I was on my way home to kill that fucking whore. But I came here first, I found you in the phonebook. Parked out front. Googled the world's strongest non-addictive tranquilisers and came in here. I'm going to be a murderer and I can feel it, I know myself.

COP #2: You know, at my anxiety workshop, I told them how this thing happened to my friend and they were actually saying that like freezing is a really normal response and that you just –

PSYCHIATRIST: Hold on a minute, son. This sounds a little bit like a fairytale.

AGLA: No, this is real.

PSYCHIATRIST: All fairytales are real.

AGLA: How many fairytales do you think I have in me?

PSYCHIATRIST: Usually there's about five, six, maybe seven.

AGLA: How do you know that?

PSYCHIATRIST: It's not just you. They're memories that are stuck inside you, intact, as if you hadn't forgotten a single detail. You recount the fairytales while I tap on your knees like so, I wave my finger from right to left. And then these so-called fairytales, or some might simply call them spells, dissolve – become ordinary memories. You cease to be controlled by them. I sometimes also administer a little L.S.D. or even mushrooms, because –

COP #2: Whoa, whoa, whoa.

COP #1: Whoa, whoa, whoa.

PSYCHIATRIST: Okay, maybe not. But Agla, you can't just leave in the middle of this, if we begin, we have to go through with it. Otherwise I can't help you.

AGLA: Am I as crazy as that Margret?

PSYCHIATRIST: Depends on how you would react if I took a quick trip to New York.

AGLA: *(about the cops)* Can they go?

PSYCHIATRIST: Not just yet. Have you ever in your lifetime sort of... met yourself? Faced yourself?

AGLA: I stopped drinking and using at twenty-one, by myself, whatever diagnosis you make, I'm actually like an addict, I'm just clean. I got through withdrawal by myself, clean ever since, no problem. With no help!

PSYCHIATRIST: I suppose you needed help, but wouldn't accept it.

AGLA: But what if I want to try to accept it now?

PSYCHIATRIST: Because you're positive that if you walk out of here, you'll go home and murder your girlfriend?

AGLA: I know it. I'm capable of it.

PSYCHIATRIST: I believe you, got a little taste of it myself... You have children?

AGLA: No, but we have a syringe full of Danish donor sperm... the plan was to make a baby today...

Cop #1 giggles.

PSYCHIATRIST: *(to the cops)* Okay, you can leave now. *(They go).*

AGLA: Can you do anything for me?

Silence. The Psychiatrist sits down.

PSYCHIATRIST: I don't know.

AGLA: Where do I start?

PSYCHIATRIST: What's the first word that comes to mind when I say the word "fairytale"?

AGLA: *(thinks it over and then realises)* Son of a bitch. Amma.*

* Amma is the Icelandic word for grandma.

Act Two

A card appears on the stage with the following information for the audience:

Fairytale #3

In a Pink Swimsuit

The Icelandic Princesses – a group of Icelandic women who all eloped to the U.S.A. with their American G.I. husbands – descend on a carpeted garage in a pink, 200 m² house in Orange Park, Florida. The Princesses all wear swimsuits with tulle around their waists, and their American husbands are dressed in khaki shorts. They are smoking and mixing vodka or rum with Coke in clear plastic glasses. Through the cloud of cigarette smoke, some photographs are visible on the wall: one is of Ronald and Nancy Reagan. There is a bar stocked with plastic two-litre bottles of vodka and rum and a karaoke jukebox. Agla’s grandmother (or “Amma”) Malla wears a pink swimsuit, cigarette in hand, and her hair is blown halfway to Heaven. She mixes herself a drink.

EYGLO: One Jack and Pepsi honey, I’ll sing the first song.

AMMA: (*snatching the microphone from Eyglo*) Not your circus, not your monkey!

BILL: They’re here! Now I love the sound of a grand old Cadillac parking in –

AMMA: Thegidu, † Bill!

Amma Malla turns off the garage lights. In the doorway, seven-year-old Agla appears with her parents, Edda and Fridgeir. They stack their ten heavy suitcases into a pile. Agla is holding a book.

EDDA: Mom! Mom, hello, would be nice if you helped us with the bags. Hello!

Cabaret from the eponymous musical starts to emanate from the jukebox, the lights come on and Amma Malla sings:

AMMA: What good is sitting alone in your room?
 Come hear the music play.
 Life is a Cabaret, old chum,
 Come to the Cabaret.

† Þegiðu is Icelandic for *shut up*, pronounced like THAY-ee-thuh.

Amma Malla pulls Agla inside, dances with her and throws her book on the ground.

Put down the knitting,
The book and the broom.
It's time for a holiday!
Life is Cabaret, old chum,
Come to the Cabaret.
Come taste the wine,

Gives Agla a little sip from her glass and everyone but Edda laughs heartily.

EDDA: We need help with the bags.

Amma Malla keeps singing:

AMMA: Come hear the band.
Come blow your horn,
Start celebrating;
Right this way,

(Pulls a chair out from a table and lets Agla take a seat.)

Your table's waiting!

FANNEY: Malla dear!

AMMA: What good's permitting
Some profit of doom
To wipe every smile away
Life is a Cabaret...

Edda walks up to the jukebox, Amma Malla stops singing but the jukebox keeps spinning until Edda pulls the plug.

EDDA: The flight was nine hours, Agla needs to get some sleep.

AMMA: Seems to me she just needs to wake up!

EDDA: No need for a performance, Mom.

FANNEY: My dear. My dear. My dear.

AMMA: *(answering Fanney without taking her eye off Edda)* Yes, my dear.

FANNEY: Mix me a drink, honey.

AMMA: Wait a minute, sweetie.

The Psychiatrist appears, somehow parallel to the world of the garage, which he observes.

PSYCHIATRIST: *(to Agla)* Who is this Fanney character?

Fanney has short, gray hair and wears an ankle-length skirt. She uses her tongue to keep her dentures from falling out of her mouth.

FANNEY: Who am I? Who are you?

PSYCHIATRIST: Uh, yes, look –

FANNEY: This one sure is handsome isn't he, Malla dear.

AMMA: What's that sweetie?

FANNEY: Huh? Where's that drink?

AMMA: I'm mixing it now! That Uptown G.I. floozy is getting awfully thirsty.

FANNEY: I've never lived Uptown.

AMMA: But you've always been a G.I. floozy?

FANNEY: Yes, that's another story. Hey Hal! Fix me a drink, honey.

AGLA: Fanney met Harold at the army base and eloped with him to the States. Amma has a nickname for everyone. She calls Harold Hal the Body even though he's 150 kilos, a hog body. Even though A.A. is big in America, Hal the Body is the only one out of all of them who's given up drinking. Amma asks him all the time:

AMMA: Are they still waiting for me at the quitters club?

HAL THE BODY: We are waiting for you, Miss Molly.

AMMA: *(to the audience)* He's dried out, the hog body, won't have a drop. I'll go to a meeting with him come Mardi Gras – hand to God.

AGLA: She always promises me every summer when I come to visit that she will give up cigarettes on Mardi Gras.

YOUNG AGLA: Amma, you promised you would stop smoking on Mardi Gras!

AMMA: You forgot to call to remind me!

AGLA: Oh, I'm sorry.

Edda and Fridgeir drag their enormous, heavy suitcases to the middle of the garage floor. The Princesses look hungrily at the suitcases. Eyglo turns to the audience.

EYGLO: I can be in this fairytale too. How do you do? Eyglo. And where do I come from?

Well, I'm from an extraordinary place – the Akranes peninsula –

AMMA: Akranes! The only “nes” in this world that's worth a damn is mayonnaise. Do you smell that, girls, that's our lumpfish –

FRIDGEIR: You have your lists handy, ladies?

FANNEY: What lists is he talking about?

AMMA: With all the wonders, darling.

FRIDGEIR: This year's requests: Rams' testicles, dried fish, horse sausage, lumpfish, fermented lumpfish, shark. Then I had to ask Atli the Nazi –

AMMA: Now there's a real personality, top of the line.

FANNEY: Who?

AMMA: Atli the Nazi.

FANNEY: He's heavenly.

AGLA: Atli the Nazi is actually a fishmonger who can get them the weirdest things they ask for.

FRIDGEIR: Atli got us the fermented whale, but I searched every freezer I could get my hands on, Fanney dear, and I couldn't find any "ground beef in an orange tin." Fanney, you asked for (*reads off list*) "a thousand kilos of tinned ground beef."

FANNEY: Yes, sir!

FRIDGEIR: I'll call them out and you tell me how many. Dried fish, haddock.

FANNEY: Four.

FRIDGEIR: Give the haddock to Fanney.

Young Agla brings four packages of dried haddock to Fanney.

FANNEY: (*about Agla*) Isn't she cute?

AGLA: Fanney is the only person my Amma doesn't speak ill of, she just says:

AMMA: Sure is a personality, isn't she, my Fanney?

AGLA: A word like "personality" can mean anything at all and the people who are best at interpreting what Amma's saying become her friends. The same goes for the phrase:

AMMA: I don't know what kind of wind hit me.

AGLA: Amma rules language. She decides what every word means and whether she takes things well or badly. That's how she keeps us all on our toes.

YOUNG AGLA: Amma, can I have dried haddock too?

AMMA: (*to Agla, angrily*) Well well, listen to this, all of a sudden she's a personality!

AGLA: Eyglo, age 58, the youngest of the group. They call her the teenager or the bossy bitch from Keflavík. Married to Roger and also lives on Rainey Avenue just like Amma, two houses up. Amma's arch-enemy or her best friend. One year it was:

AMMA: (*sweet, almost sentimental*) She's definitely a personality, that Eyglo.

AGLA: And the next year it was:

AMMA: Let me tell you something about Eyglo, sonny boy. She's two-faced. I tell it like it is and people don't know what wind will hit them. Eyglo thinks she's such a personality and let me tell you –

AGLA: If Eyglo and Amma are –

AMMA: On speaking terms...

AGLA: ...when we're visiting then they throw an Icelanders' party at Eyglo's house and Eyglo sings, Roger plays the accordion and Grandpa Bill, Amma's husband, plays the harmonica. They play mostly Icelandic songs, The Icelandic Band. Amma sits across the room and judges Eyglo. The whole party revolves around trying to get Amma to sing. They clap for her, but she refuses to sing, probably too drunk to stand.

AMMA: Drunk? No, no, it's these wobbly heels, they're like stilts.

EYGLO: (*smirking*) I gave them to her...

YOUNG AGLA: Please, Amma, sing.

AMMA: How am I supposed to get around Eyglo? Her personality's all over this place!

AGLA: Amma insinuates that she was a cabaret singer in Las Vegas, but there isn't any evidence that she was. Amma always sings the same tune:

AMMA: (*singing*) Say the things you used to say – and make the world go away – I am sorry if I hurt you.

Edda storms off.

AGLA: As soon as Amma starts to sing the song, Mom disappears, goes in the bathroom and doesn't come out until half an hour later. Everyone is too drunk to notice. Except me. Amma became an Icelandic Princess, eloped from Keflavík and left Mom behind with her Grandpa.

EDDA: Some nights when Mom was out drinking she called home to Iceland. She wanted to put me to sleep and started singing *Make The World Go Away* like a lullaby. But there's a time difference between Florida and Keflavík so it was the middle of the night for me. I was fast asleep, the sound of the telephone ringing woke me up. And usually she cried so much that I had to soothe her and it was Mom who fell asleep on the phone while all of a sudden it was daytime for me and I had to go to school.

AGLA: Amma and Eyglo were less and less often...

AMMA: On speaking terms. We're simply not on speaking terms. (*To the audience*) And she's getting so fat that Eyglo, that poor personality, that she doesn't smoke cigarettes after getting plowed, no, what do you think that personality smokes?

AGLA: Eyglo is so fat and greedy that after sex she doesn't smoke cigarettes, she smokes...

AMMA: Tell them, Agla!

FANNEY: (*to audience*) Sausages.

AGLA: They were less and less often on speaking terms.

EYGLO: Malla is so dumb, she used to study before taking a pregnancy test.

PSYCHIATRIST: Were they on Valium, pill heads? That's the thing with this generation, you need to take them down a few notches.

FANNEY: This one's got a mouth on him.

AGLA: They weren't, but only because they were all soldiers' wives and got their medical care from the U.S. Army. Army doctors are much stricter and recognize alcoholics in a heartbeat so they were careful not to give "the Icelandic Princesses" any addictive medication. And that's why they all lived so long or as Amma put it:

AMMA: Vodka's an excellent preservative, darling.

PSYCHIATRIST: So your grandmother is still alive?

AGLA: Yes. Sure.

PSYCHIATRIST: And you visited her...

AGLA: Every year.

PSYCHIATRIST: One thing I don't understand: Where is the shame? And why was this trip so significant?

AGLA: Because this was the last time. Amma Malla abandoned my mom when she was seven years old. I was seven years old on this trip.

Edda enters. Fridgeir takes the canned ground beef out of a suitcase. Amma Malla takes Agla on to her lap.

FRIDGEIR: I had finally found tinned ground beef inside a freezer that had been unplugged and was laying on its side in a basement along with other things that belonged to the bankruptcy estate of a wholesale Cash & Carry.

The Icelandic Princesses applaud and whistle.

FRIDGEIR: Thank you but, Fanney, the tinned beef expired quite a few years ago –

AMMA: Well so did she.

The Icelandic Princesses laugh their heads off. Young Agla brings the tinned beef to Fanney.

FRIDGEIR: Open it in the sink because... (*Fanney pulls out a can opener*) there's gases in there that... well, they could...

The tin of ground beef explodes all over the coffee table, Fanney is covered in ground beef but she starts eating it off the table and out of the tin anyway. The Icelandic Princesses act like it's nothing. Fridgeir and Edda stare at Fanney.

AMMA: (*to Edda and Fridgeir*) What's your problem? Are we here to drink or are we here to judge?

EYGLO: Why not both?

Fannee and Malla erupt into laughter.

EDDA: Mom, we're going to bed now. Agla, kiss Amma goodnight.

Young Agla crawls onto her grandmother's lap.

AGLA: Amma Malla smells like –

EDDA: Vodka.

AGLA: Chanel no. 5!

EDDA: Cigarettes. Misty Long.

FRIDGEIR: That brand isn't available in Iceland but Atli the Nazi happens to know an Austrian who smuggles cigarettes and –

EDDA: Disgusting the way she smells.

AGLA: What's your problem? She smells sweet to me, best smell in the world, just like how you imagine that pink smells, you know, the color.

AMMA: You calling me Hubba Bubba bubblegum?

AGLA: On Icelandic independence day, the Icelandic Princesses of Florida all come to Amma's house in their national costumes and sweat like pigs, drink Brennivín out of shot glasses with the national crest on them, and try to remember the lyrics to old Icelandic pop songs. They all plan on returning home someday, but as winners, rich and preferably famous, but that hasn't really worked out so Amma's garage will have to do. I love them. I think everything they say is funny and as strange as they seemed, I understood them 100%, much more than I understood the girls at school or even my mom. We belonged to the same species. And Amma let me touch the flappy skin on her elbow and under her arms and let me pinch her and play around, no opinion of me, endless space for me. When Mom wanted me to stop eating sweets but I gained eight kilos in three weeks at Amma's house, Amma taught me how to dress slimmer.

AMMA: Black makes it all melt away, darling.

EDDA: *(to young Agla)* Time for sleep.

YOUNG AGLA: I don't want to sleep.

AMMA: She's just like Amma.

EDDA: No, she's not just like Amma.

AMMA: Let the girl sit here with me, go unpack your bags, sweetie.

FRIDGEIR: Malla, it's just your stuff that's left, I'll take care of it, I –

AMMA: Edda honey, you don't leave all the work to your husband, you're just like Eyglo. Take care of the rest.

FRIDGEIR: Edda here, she has a bad back and –

AMMA: (*calling her husband*) Bill dear, mix him a drink, honey.

BILL: What are you drinking?

FRIDGEIR: Just beer, great.

Edda opens the suitcase and a smell erupts.

BILL: Oh, dear, I know that smell, now it's the rotten shark! It's a hákarl, miss Molly!

AMMA: Thegidu, Bill.

BILL: It wasn't always thegidu, Bill.

AGLA: Grandpa Bill was Amma's third husband. Her first was my grandfather who, she said, took the rubbish out on a Friday and came back into the house on a Monday. Then there was husband number two who Amma called monkey in the middle and then last but not least, Grandpa Bill who fought in the Vietnam war, which he said was about two things:

BILL: Basketball and poker.

Edda rifles through the suitcase and finally finds something.

EDDA: Lumpfish.

Little Agla brings her grandmother the lumpfish.

AMMA: Mmm, no, girls, when I boil this I'm going to turn the lights out so you don't come and steal it from me – then there'll be licking and sucking.

EDDA: Shark and oxtail.

Little Agla carries them to her grandmother.

AMMA: Thanks, honey.

EDDA: And you already have the dried haddock.

AMMA: Yes, ma'am.

EDDA: Then that's all.

AMMA: It is not.

EDDA: What do you mean, it's not?

AMMA: There's no fermented lumpfish.

EDDA: It's not in here. (*Edda searches the bags*).

Pause.

AMMA: You forgot about me.

EDDA: I forgot the fermented lumpfish.

AMMA: Of course, you couldn't care less about the lumpfish.

EDDA: Yes, I couldn't care less about some fish!

AMMA: Just forget about it like it's not important to you at all. Fix me a drink.

EDDA: No.

AMMA: You don't remember what I drink?

EDDA: It's hard to forget that you drink, Mom, but I don't care to remember exactly what you drink.

AMMA: (*Asks the other Princesses*) Isn't she a cop? Aren't cops supposed to be observant?

Edda, mix me a drink!

Young Agla gets her Amma's glass, everyone's eyes are on her as she mixes a generous double vodka water and gives it to her grandmother.

AMMA: You remember what Amma drinks?

Amma Malla is deeply moved, goes to the closet and takes out a little pink swimsuit which looks exactly like the one she is wearing. She puts the swimsuit on young Agla.

AMMA: You remember what aunt Fanney drinks?

YOUNG AGLA: Think so. Triple rum and Coke.

Young Agla fetches Fanney's glass and mixes a generous double rum and Coke.

AMMA: She's right, isn't she?

FANNEY: She sure is, Malla.

AMMA: Fanney, we're finally famous enough to have our very own bartender.

FANNEY: She is awfully cute.

AMMA: Apple of her Amma's eye.

FANNEY: Bartender for Icelandic princesses –

AMMA: Just our style, Fanney darling.

Young Agla is about to hand Fanney her drink.

EDDA: (*to Agla*) Stop. Agla. Drink it yourself. If someone mixes a drink then they have to drink it.

The scene freezes and the Psychiatrist steps in.

PSYCHIATRIST: This is the moment?

AGLA: Yes. I didn't know what I'd done wrong but I knew Mom would never forgive me for it.

FRIDGEIR: So you all have the food you asked for so maybe time for us to go to bed and –

EDDA: Drink up, girl. Now.

FRIDGEIR: Hey, hey, girls.

Young Agla starts drinking.

AMMA: Give the drink to Fanney, sweetie, good job.

Agla gives the drink to Fanney.

EDDA: At least take off that swimsuit, Agla.

AMMA: Well well, now we strip tease?

EDDA: Swimsuit off!

AMMA: What kind of wind just hit her?

EDDA: *(yelling)* Take off that disgusting swimsuit, Agla!

Edda pulls off young Agla's swimsuit and storms out of the garage with her in tow. The others remain in silence for a moment until Amma Malla speaks.

AMMA: Can you believe that personality?

FANNEY: *(about Edda)* Good for her.

The fairytale ends; Agla and the Psychiatrist sit alone in the office.

AGLA: It was nothing serious. I do know that.

PSYCHIATRIST: But it must have been serious for a seven-year-old girl to be caught between, well, these belligerent sort of women –

AGLA: But she learned from it too.

PSYCHIATRIST: And now she might need to unlearn it.

AGLA: No, because she learned how to read into a situation: What is dangerous? Who is dangerous? What do people need? At work, until our house was broken into, no one had ever attacked me, I could always fix anything, prevent an escalation. It was like my superpower.

PSYCHIATRIST: You had a way with people.

AGLA: I had a way with people! Now, I –

PSYCHIATRIST: And your Amma had a way with people. Your character is closer to your grandmother than your mother. Right?

AGLA: I'm also always trying to fix that. Amma obviously abandoned my mom, I don't want to be someone who abandons everyone.

A telephone starts to ring.

A card appears on the stage with the following information for the audience:

Fairytale #4 – 1970

When Malla Met Bill

A dingy bar near the Orlando airport in Florida in 1970. Amma Malla is smoking and drinking a Bloody Mary. The bartender picks up the ringing telephone.

BARTENDER: It's for you, ma'am.

AGLA: Amma Malla hesitates, she knows the call is from her father, Grandpa Benny. He bought her a ticket home – after three years in the United States, Amma Malla was going back home to Iceland.

AMMA: Tail between my legs... *(into the phone)* Have they rolled out the red carpet? The Uptown girl comes home crazed from America –

BENNI: Just having coffee, aren't you?

AMMA: Sure, sure, and donuts.

Grandpa Benny laughs.

BENNI: Good, no sauce for my girl. Listen, the apartment is small, belongs to your sister and you get to have Edda over there every other weekend at first and then maybe –

AMMA: Well, isn't that dandy.

AGLA: The way Amma told this story, it was like a romantic scene in a movie; it wasn't until I started telling it myself that I heard how awful it was. Amma did say that the apartment her sister Pissy offered her in Iceland was:

AMMA: *(to the audience)* Filled with damp and old board games.

BENNI: What's your seat number?

AMMA: *(inspects the barstool)* Number one, I presume.

BENNI: On the airplane.

AMMA: What, is this an interrogation, Daddy?

BENNI: What's the seat number, Magdalena?

AMMA: *(reads off the ticket)* 31 B.

BENNI: I sent you a little extra money for some gifts for Edda. If you haven't bought anything yet you can buy some candy at the airport.

AMMA: *(with an American accent)* Skittles, Snickers and M&M's!

YOUNG EDDA: (*interrupting the call*) Mommy, I caught a small fry, and I petted a dog and got ice cream.

BENNI: Edda is coming along to pick you up. I showed her your pictures, so she'll recognise you.

AMMA: Nice for a kid to have a star of radio and stage for a mother.

BENNI: Quite enough for a kid, honey, just to have a mother.

AMMA: See you in a little while, Daddy.

BENNI: She's excited to see you.

AMMA: Who wouldn't be? (*She slams down the receiver and hands the phone to the bartender*).

BARTENDER: Going somewhere, ma'am?

AMMA: To Iceland.

BARTENDER: Ireland?

AMMA: Iceland.

BARTENDER: Ohh, yeah, with the eskimos.

AMMA: Yes, with the eskimos.

BARTENDER: Are they nice?

AMMA: Who?

BARTENDER: The eskimos?

AMMA: No, they're not.

BARTENDER: Why are you going then?

AMMA: That's a very good question.

AGLA: And that's where the story begins, like a scene from a black and white movie, Amma's favourite fairytale, but the story my mother will never forgive.

Gnossienne I starts to play and the bar transforms into the set of an American movie and Amma Malla is the star. Colleen (age 7) climbs onto the chair next to Amma Malla and gives her a terrible shock.

AMMA: Edda baby, are you, you're not supposed to be here, you...

COLLEEN: I'm Colleen. Will you be my mommy?

AGLA: Amma always started her story by describing this bar near the airport as a hole in the wall, but by this point it became cavernous and enchanting. Colleen took Amma's hand and I imagine Amma took her drink with her. Colleen pulled Amma through the bar which was crowded with drunks. And lying on the floor was the future Vietnam soldier,

little Colleen's father and Amma Malla's soon-to-be third husband, none other than Grandpa Bill. Give him a round of applause!

Colleen prods her father.

COLLEEN: I found her.

AGLA: Colleen's mother had been killed in a plane crash only weeks before. She was flying off with her lover, was going to take Colleen away and leave Grandpa Bill behind, alone and drunk somewhere. But then the plane went down and Grandpa Bill became a single father in America in the 1970s.

BILL: Ma'am, it's a pleasure, it's a great pleasure. And your name?

AMMA: Malla.

BILL: Malla? I'll call you Molly. Miss Molly, a Southern belle. And when will you marry me, Miss Molly Wood? From Hollywood...

AGLA: For a long time at Keflavík airport there was a glass wall by the arrival gate.

Through it you could see who landed in Keflavík and how many bottles of liquor they bought and how expensive they were. They bricked up the glass once Customs realised that drug smugglers and criminals stood there to keep an eye on their mules, watching and intimidating them through the glass. Grandpa Benni and Mom stared through the glass, waiting for Amma Malla to land and become her mother again. Mom insisted on wearing American clothes so that when Amma was with her, she would feel at home.

Both of them suspected Amma Malla would never arrive and both of them were right.

AMMA: Miss Molly Wood... which makes you...?

BILL: William Earl Wood, but you can call me Bill.

AGLA: And there Amma Malla disappeared for ten years. When Amma told me this story the first time, it was about love at first sight. But people grow out of being romantic and instead they fall in love with reality which can be just as phoney as romance. Later on when she would tell me this story, Amma always added:

AMMA: I said to him: I don't love you now, but love will grow.

PSYCHIATRIST: Very good, Agla, just great, thank you for this. Let's come back now. I'm going to count to three and then you can wake up. One, two (*snaps fingers*) three.

Agla wakes in the Psychiatrist's office. It takes her a moment to regain her senses. They sit opposite one another.

AGLA: And there she is, still.

PSYCHIATRIST: Who?

AGLA: Mom.

PSYCHIATRIST: Where?

AGLA: Behind that glass wall in Arrivals, waiting for Amma to come home, different, and embrace her.

PSYCHIATRIST: And because your mother is waiting by the glass wall, she didn't have any time to embrace you?

AGLA: I'm also waiting by the glass. And I want to hug my Mom but she's got her face pressed to the glass. I don't have what she needs. Amma has so much love to give, I understand how someone wanted her.

PSYCHIATRIST: But her love is always oversized?

AGLA: Yes.

PSYCHIATRIST: Very typical of love addicts and those who have succumbed to fantasy.

AGLA: (*springing up*) Don't talk about my grandmother like that.

Silence.

PSYCHIATRIST: And then I imagine your mom, as a sort of antithesis to her own mother, very... moderate. Everything in order, routine, ordinary.

AGLA: Yes.

PSYCHIATRIST: Because anything normal was so exotic to your mom. Understand that?

AGLA: Yes.

PSYCHIATRIST: Then why are you so angry at her?

AGLA: Mom?

PSYCHIATRIST: Yes. But as if you're accusing her and excusing her at the same time by telling me about your grandmother.

AGLA: She hates her mother.

PSYCHIATRIST: Do you hate your mother?

AGLA: I don't hate anyone.

PSYCHIATRIST: You've assaulted me twice and you're on your way home to kill your girlfriend, I hope that you're at least angry and not just –

AGLA: A sociopath?

PSYCHIATRIST: You said something earlier: I don't have what my mother needs.

AGLA: Do you have what people need?

PSYCHIATRIST: Are you going to hit me?

AGLA: Let's just say I'm looking into it.

PSYCHIATRIST: (*stands up*) Okay. Hit me. I'm a gentleman. I'll let you hit me... first. But when you've hit me I get to hit you back. Okay?

AGLA: What's your problem?

PSYCHIATRIST: This is what you need.

AGLA: For someone to hit me?

PSYCHIATRIST: For something to stop you, to come back at you with force. Let's think about this a little. You see, I think your mother, your partner, your father are all fighting over you but not with you. What's stopping you?

A card appears on the stage with the following information for the audience:

Fairytale #5

A Book About Poop

Agla and her girlfriend Hanna are at a wedding reception. They sit at a table with Edda and Fridgeir. Fridgeir wears a suit that was in fashion twenty years ago, Edda and Agla wear almost identical black pantsuits, but Hanna sports a sundress that she's not quite young enough to pull off. A waiter serves each guest a bowl of chocolate mousse. We hear the din of the wedding crowd.

AGLA: And what's the title of the book?

FRIDGEIR: *It's All the Same Shit Anyway.*

AGLA: And it's a book about poop?

HANNA: I would buy a book about poop.

EDDA: You might be able to get your picture in there –

AGLA: Let him finish!

FRIDGEIR: There's no more. Just that. Photographs of poop.

AGLA: Writing about poop?

FRIDGEIR: Mmm. Some text about poop. Things like: This is vixen turd.

HANNA: Yes, maybe scientific facts about poop, nutritional science or some wise words about poop or sayings.

EDDA: It's all the same shit anyway is a saying.

AGLA: How many pictures do you have?

FRIDGEIR: I'd say a thousand.

HANNA: Speaking of pictures, I just want to say something –

AGLA: A thousand page book?

FRIDGEIR: I don't know.

AGLA: How many different species?

FRIDGEIR: About sixty. Swan turd, ptarmigan turd, great northern diver turd, gannet turd, American bittern turd, common gull turd, black-backed gull turd –

EDDA: Agla dear, do you really need a complete list of turds?

FRIDGEIR: And vixen turd.

AGLA: What's vixen turd like? (*Fridgeir laughs*) What's so funny?

FRIDGEIR: That's my favourite turd.

AGLA: Why's that?

HANNA: You could make an Instagram for the turds, Fridgeir, well maybe not, they'd ban it, Instagram would classify it as porn.

AGLA: Why is vixen turd your favourite kind of turd?

FRIDGEIR: Foxes like to eat colourful birds. Or that's my theory, because, you see, the turd of a vixen is exquisite. Maroon feathers, white bird bones, orange beak.

EDDA: Dear God.

AGLA: Got a picture?

FRIDGEIR: Yes.

He shows them and the audience this picture:



HANNA: Can I put it on Instagram?

EDDA: Then Instagram will steal the photo.

HANNA: Instagram isn't interested in poop.

EDDA: I see, but it's interested in you.

AGLA: Mom!

EDDA: Excuse me, I'm just starving here, the food is inedible, I'm never going to a wedding again.

Brief silence.

HANNA: We get the sperm donation next week.

AGLA: But we don't need to discuss that right now.

HANNA: We do, because I know I'll get pregnant as soon as we start trying.

EDDA: What's there to talk about? You just smear the donor's sperm inside your crotch. I'm sure you can find a tutorial on Instagram, or maybe you want to film your own tutorial, haha.

HANNA: Yes. Exactly. We're going to show it all, ultrasounds and everything on Instagram, people can follow along, just open up the whole process.

EDDA: And the birth? Live-streamed?

HANNA: No, maybe not.

EDDA: Leaving out the best part! Compression socks and pelvic girdle pain but no birth?

HANNA: And our wedding.

EDDA: Well, that's perfect, I get to skip dying of hunger and boredom, I'll just watch it on Instagram.

HANNA: (*jumps to her feet, strikes her glass for a toast, pretending to be having the time of her life*) Hellohellohello, you probably don't know who I am –

AGLA: Sit down.

HANNA: (*continuing*) My name is Hanna, daughter-in-law of Edda here and she actually, you know what, I'm welling up, the things she's been saying about weddings –

AGLA: Please, sit down.

HANNA: So incredibly beautiful that I just have to stop and ask her to say these things out loud so that you get to hear them too. My dear mother-in-law, please share with us all how terrific you think this wedding is.

EDDA: (*hesitates but eventually stands*) Yes. (*Silence*). See, policewomen like me, we get callous, hard, become sort of, well, rough from doing our jobs. Domestic violence, dead bodies. And to be able to protect others you have to guard yourself. So I'm a little

vulgar at weddings, don't feel like I really fit in. Or didn't really feel like I fitted in. Those of us who are, well, cops, at some point we stop listening to people and start observing them. Which isn't good or bad, just the way it is. And I was observing the newlyweds earlier and I noticed a small detail. They were stepping down from the horse and the bride, little Bibba, was about to step into a puddle but then, without thinking, the groom whisked her over the puddle. Protected those pretty shoes and saved the day without a second thought. And I, or the policewoman in me, melted and I could see that small piece of evidence of love and then I myself felt that love. And that's what I just told the kids here. I want to thank you for letting me observe and see real love. *(to Hanna)* Because there are plenty of people who say they're loving, but don't know how to show it.

Applause, also from the audience. They all sit in silence.

AGLA: How many copies?

FRIDGEIR: Thousand maybe.

HANNA: I am loving.

FRIDGEIR: *(to Edda)* Of course she's loving, why are you pestering the girl?

EDDA: Well, finally I'm spoken to, I thought I was impossible to talk to.

FRIDGEIR: You don't know how to talk.

EDDA: Are we not having a conversation?

FRIDGEIR: You interrogate and you accuse.

EDDA: Then I'll just listen.

FRIDGEIR: You don't bother with listening, you just analyse what other people say.

EDDA: I only do that when people don't know how to tell the truth...

FRIDGEIR: Right there, you're accusing.

EDDA: Then I'll just be quiet.

FRIDGEIR: If you only knew how to do that...

EDDA: I am always trying my best.

AGLA: Oh please Mom, quit whining.

FRIDGEIR: We're sitting here for seven more minutes, have a bite of this exquisite...

chocolate mousse and then we're going home. We've had quite enough attention here already.

Hanna kisses Agla. Takes a photo.

EDDA: Apparently not.

HANNA: For Instagram. What should the caption be?

AGLA: Whatever you want.

HANNA: *(writing the caption)* Moms-to-be.

Edda is furious and tries to stand up, but Agla grabs her by the shoulder.

EDDA: *(to Hanna)* Your house is broken into while Agla is in the shower and instead of even alerting her, you run away. And instead of calling 112, you just stand outside like a pile of rubbish.

HANNA: I was in shock! I –

EDDA: *(Jumping up)* I, I, I, I, I.

We no longer hear the sound of clinking cutlery, as all the wedding guests are now silently staring at Edda.

AGLA: *(trying to change the topic)* What about dog shit?

FRIDGEIR: Dog shit isn't quite so remarkable, dog food and dog shit look almost exactly alike, but vixen turd on the other hand –

EDDA: And now you're going to have a child with my daughter. What if you're bathing the kid and someone breaks in? Are you smiling? Look, she just smiles. But with her mouth. She never smiles with her eyes. Do you run away from the kid or do you jump right out the window? I always thought you were a good actress, charming girl and I'm sure you're as decent as you say you are, but you're not a spouse and you're hardly a mother.

AGLA: Mom!

HANNA: *(to Agla)* Take a photo of us.

EDDA: Oh, please.

Hanna throws the phone to Agla who takes a photo of Hanna and Edda together.

HANNA: *(to Edda)* What should the caption be: Party with the in-laws. Or: Can't wait to be an Amma?

AGLA: Girls, please.

EDDA: Agla. Write: Mom-in-law keeps her eye on me.

End of fairytale.

Agla closes her eyes and Edda, Fridgeir and Hanna disappear from the table and the wedding is history. Then the Psychiatrist takes his place opposite Agla begins tapping softly on her knees. Agla is hypnotised and does not open her eyes.

Agla stands up and enters Edda's office, who is the chief of police. Edda is leafing through a file.

EDDA: Have a seat, Agla.

AGLA: (*almost as if still under hypnosis*) Mom, I feel so –

EDDA: Don't call me Mom when we're at work.

AGLA: Right, I'm sorry.

EDDA: And don't say you're sorry. This isn't some kind of self-help workshop.

AGLA: (*coming to*) Yes. I just want to thank, or I just want to say, um. Even though I'm tired of being a beat cop, all the waiting is probably going to be valuable to me as a sergeant. I'm going to be the best because you made me fight for so long for this promotion. I know I was really pissed off, but I understand you now and –

EDDA: It's not easy being your supervisor.

Agla becomes hesitant.

AGLA: I speak my mind, you're my boss here, not my mom.

EDDA: You threatened to resign when I wanted to give everyone a gun.

AGLA: A gun creates distance between me and the public. You want to be able to take those nutcases by the arm and say: "There, there." Embrace them. You can't do that with a gun on your belt, but we've been over this already and –

EDDA: And your gun is in the car, isn't that right? You can embrace people to your heart's content.

AGLA: You think I crossed a line with the gun thing?

EDDA: No, no, not at all...

AGLA: You called me in here to give me a promotion?

EDDA: Agla –

AGLA: Any other chief would have made me sergeant ages ago.

EDDA: You've talked three people down from the ledge of a building and one from jumping into the ocean. People were fighting over being your partner. When there was a mental distress call they specifically asked for the "empathetic girl". So you understand my surprise. Don't you? (*Silence*). You answer me.

AGLA: Why does that surprise you?

EDDA: (*leafing through papers*) A fourteen year old boy's arm is broken, you pushed him for stealing a bicycle. You kicked a handcuffed man in the nuts. You punched a man in psychosis. Agla, these are clear violations of conduct, and like an idiot I've covered for you –

AGLA: I've been a beat cop for fourteen years. I'm just burning out.

EDDA: No one wants to be partnered with you. You've become dangerous. And it says here you refuse to see a shrink.

AGLA: I just need a promotion, that's the solution.

EDDA: Psychiatrist?

AGLA: No, no, I –

EDDA: A few guys here at the station go to A.A.-meetings. They could bring you along.

AGLA: I've been sober for fifteen years, I don't need any fucking meetings.

EDDA: They might help.

AGLA: Then how about you go?

EDDA: So you refuse to accept any help?

AGLA: Yes.

EDDA: Okay.

AGLA: But I would love some more responsibility, If I could just dive into a case then –

EDDA: You're going on leave.

AGLA: What do you mean?

EDDA: I can't make people deal with this any longer. You're on leave as of today.

AGLA: Deal with what?

EDDA: Your typical emotional woman.

AGLA: You want me not to have emotions?

EDDA: A man broke into your house, sweetie, and you are still traumatised.

AGLA: I took all the overtime, every training course, every assignment. No one has worked as long and hard as me without getting promoted.

EDDA: Emotional as ever!

AGLA: (*calmly*) All the overtime, all the training, all the assignments.

EDDA: You will go on leave for one year.

AGLA: No one has waited as long as me.

EDDA: There's nothing else on the table.

AGLA: There is.

EDDA: I'm not transferring you to C.I.D.

AGLA: I'm not talking about that. (*Pause.*) Fire me.

EDDA: Sweetie, don't act like this.

AGLA: Fire me.

EDDA: No, that is not an option.

AGLA: Fire me, Mom. Or are we at some kind of self-help workshop?

Silence.

EDDA: Okay. You will get six months severance pay, can find yourself a new job in that time. The police force thanks you for your service. The discharge is effective as of today. You're fired.

Edda shows Agla the door.

AGLA: Six whole months.

EDDA: Yes.

AGLA: To destroy myself.

EDDA: It's up to you how you plan out your severance period.

AGLA: Six months to fucking destroy my life.

EDDA: Only took your grandmother a weekend.

AGLA: Six months to destroy you!!

EDDA: We at the department of justice wish you all the best in any future endeavours.

AGLA: I'm going to destroy my life and it's going to be your fault!

EDDA: Best of luck.

Edda disappears and the Psychiatrist is alone again with Agla, tapping on her knees when Agla snaps out of her hypnosis.

AGLA: What are you doing to me?

PSYCHIATRIST: Agla.

Agla pours a glass of vodka. The Psychiatrist downs it in one. Agla fills the glass again; the Psychiatrist takes a decorous sip.

AGLA: Refreshing spending time with such an honest drinker.

PSYCHIATRIST: It's not as if you booked a session, I'm technically on holiday.

AGLA: But how do I pay you?

PSYCHIATRIST: How do you want to pay? You can make a transfer or –

AGLA: Please, I got the six months severance all transferred to me ten minutes after my mom fired me so I have money if we want to do something. Eat out, I could book a hotel somewhere out in the country and we can keep going over my case.

PSYCHIATRIST: If we continue, we are just going to do it here at the office.

AGLA: Chill out, I'm just saying.

PSYCHIATRIST: I get it.

AGLA: And you took the oath, the Hippocratic Oath.

PSYCHIATRIST: I would never spend time with you by choice.

AGLA: What do you mean? I'm fun.

PSYCHIATRIST: You're dangerous.

AGLA: Some people might enjoy that.

PSYCHIATRIST: I don't think people enjoy it, they succumb to it.

AGLA: But you want to help me. I remind you of someone.

PSYCHIATRIST: I have to help you.

AGLA: See, you're worried about me.

PSYCHIATRIST: I'm more worried about your girlfriend. She's waiting at home thinking you two are going to make a baby, but her life might be in danger. Isn't that the case?

AGLA: It is but I –

PSYCHIATRIST: That's why I need to help you. Where do we go next? *(No reply)* Where do you want to go?

AGLA: I want to get out of here.

PSYCHIATRIST: Agla...

AGLA: Come on. You've been drinking all day...

PSYCHIATRIST: But there are more fairytales, we need to go over the break-in, delve into the darkness –

AGLA: Yes, but I want to go there with someone who has been there himself. You've never done this work.

The Psychiatrist reaches into a drawer and pulls out a pack of pills.

PSYCHIATRIST: Then we're done here. Zyprexa 20mg, there you go.

Agla takes the pack from him.

AGLA: Thanks.

PSYCHIATRIST: But wait. You can't be alone when you take it, someone has to be with you.

Agla throws the pack back at the Psychiatrist. She walks to the door, knocks and the two cops appear.

COP #1: Alright, what's the score?

AGLA: *(very convincing)* You know what, feeling so much better, great to talk to someone.

COP #1: Isn't it?

AGLA: Yeah, whoa. But this guy isn't the one, he's kind of drunk.

The Psychiatrist stands up to protest, but stumbles slightly.

COP #1: Yeah, for sure... that's obviously not so great...

AGLA: No. What's the name of the guy who helped you?

COP #2: The anxiety workshop guy?

AGLA: Yeah, awesome.

COP #2: No problem. I'll find the number. He's like the master of anxiety.

COP #1: Good to hear you're doing so well, buddy.

PSYCHIATRIST: Agla, the Zyprexa.

AGLA: Why don't you take it yourself? You could use a little rest.

Agla and the other officers leave the office, closing the door behind them. They stand outside.

AGLA: One solution we came up with today.

COP #1: Right on, slam dunk I would say, really nice.

AGLA: Did you find the kid that broke into our place?

COP #2: *(hesitant)* Um, we think so. Going to arrest someone today.

AGLA: Don't arrest him, bring him over to mine... I need to have a little talk with the guy...

COP #1: Mmm, the kid who broke into your house, you want to see him and...

AGLA: And just close the case.

COP #2: And the psychiatrist approved this?

AGLA: *(lying)* Approved? It was his idea!

COP #1: Okay, that guy is hammered.

AGLA: I want to see the kid before you officially arrest him. You get me?

COP #2: Yeah, yep, definitely we got you.

AGLA: Great. Bring him by my house later. But first I've got to take care of my girl.

Agla and Hanna's kitchen is stuffed to the gills with dead flowers. On the table is a glass tub full of ice water. Hanna pours boiling water into a bowl while the Reporter takes pictures of her with her phone. Hanna is wearing a dress. The Reporter places a recorder on the table.

HANNA: Do you know how to save flowers?

REPORTER: This is not an interview for Better Homes & Gardens.

HANNA: Just think how fun it would be for your readers to learn how to do it?

REPORTER: What?

HANNA: To save flowers. People just throw them away.

REPORTER: Do you feel like that sometimes, like you've been thrown away?

HANNA: Write: "First you plunge the stem..." No, don't write that. Write: "First you finger the stem."

REPORTER: Grab the stem.

HANNA: You don't exactly grab it, because if it has thorns obviously then... one wields the stem.

REPORTER: Alright, one wields the stem...

HANNA: "Gingerly, Hanna trims the lowest part of the stalk and transfers it to boiling water."

REPORTER: Or just puts it in boiling water?

HANNA: I don't care, this is your interview. "After that, Hanna produces a vessel of ice water" –

REPORTER: When does Agla get here?

HANNA: Any minute now. "And then one eases the stalk towards the ice water and gingerly dips it in."

Hanna dips the stem into the water and then pulls it out.

REPORTER: And then what?

HANNA: Then the flower comes back to life.

They both stare at the flower.

REPORTER: I don't see any change. In the flower. It's just as dead as before.

HANNA: Maybe that's the lesson. I tried to save it, failed, and it's nothing to be ashamed about. Isn't that kind of the gist of the interview, just try it?

REPORTER: Hanna, it's pointless interviewing someone about how they tried to do something...

HANNA: No, I promise it's going to be insane. Want to see the syringe?

REPORTER: Okay.

Hanna takes a syringe filled with sperm out of the fridge.

HANNA: He studied at Oxford. The sperm did. Or the guy who ejaculated the sperm. Into the syringe. He studied at Oxford. But I don't know what. Hopefully nothing weird. Hopefully not like, you know, choirmastery... don't write that!

REPORTER: Can I photograph the syringe?

HANNA: Of course! That's the whole idea. I want to open up the process as much as possible and when Agla gets here she'll just squirt it in, you can definitely take pictures for us and for the process.

REPORTER: But what if I'm not interested in this process?

HANNA: But I want to talk about the process...

REPORTER: You know, nobody wants to hear about it. The fact that some former actress wants to get sperminated isn't exactly a scoop.

HANNA: I'm a current actress.

REPORTER: What are you playing right now?

Pause.

HANNA: So what is it that you're interested in?

REPORTER: Stories, people. Let me turn on the recorder.

The reporter turns on the recorder and Gnossienne 1 begins to play once more.

A card appears on the stage with the following information for the audience:

Fairytale #6

The Lukas Case

Black out.

INTERMISSION

REPORTER: How did you and Agla meet?

HANNA: That's not on the menu so to speak.

REPORTER: But isn't this an open process?

HANNA: Not that open.

REPORTER: She arrested you, didn't she?

HANNA: Look –

REPORTER: For what?

HANNA: You put the syringe into your vag just like this and then –

REPORTER: You're not famous and seriously, like 50% of people who go through artificial insemination are really open about it on Instagram and everything. I'll even write about it and about your dead flowers, but then you have to... why did she arrest you?

HANNA: Not because of me.

REPORTER: Why did she arrest you?

HANNA: Because of animal abuse.

REPORTER: You abuse animals?

HANNA: Are you insane? Do you know nothing about me? I've never even tasted meat!

Animal abuse! Aren't you a reporter? Huh? Don't you know how to do research?

REPORTER: I do, that's how I know you were arrested in connection to a story about a dog.

Pause.

HANNA: You could say that I was sort of like a cop for animals.

REPORTER: Where did you find that job?

HANNA: It wasn't a job, it was just –

REPORTER: A hobby?

HANNA: No, a calling.

REPORTER: Sweetie, the readers are going to identify with you, people understand much more than we give them credit for. What happened?

HANNA: I heard news about a dog that was missing.

REPORTER: And what about it?

HANNA: I could sense that it was something horrific and I started investigating and asking people about it.

REPORTER: It was a dog? There were no sightings, owner scared out of their mind?

HANNA: Yes. And the preliminary evidence showed that he had been tortured. Are you sensitive?

REPORTER: No.

HANNA: Is your readership sensitive?

REPORTER: No, I work for the Times, our readership is mostly deceased.

HANNA: They tortured the dog to death with razor wire.

REPORTER: But it was just a small dog, right?

HANNA: Yeah, small dog, chihuahua, I couldn't believe it, but the evidence in my Facebook group showed how a man had cut off his paws, wrapped him in razor wire and let him dangle off a cliff. Punched him.

REPORTER: Punched the dog?

HANNA: Yes. Yes. Punched him. Yelled at him. Even... urinated on him.

REPORTER: That must have upset you.

HANNA: Upset? I was furious. Then I found out who the guy was and where he lived.

REPORTER: And you drove to Akureyri. You were supposed to be onstage at the National Theatre –

HANNA: This was more important. I brought crisps and Coke and sweets and stuff.

REPORTER: And a shotgun.

HANNA: Yes, and razor wire. And I drove to Akureyri and parked outside the guy's house and got into the trunk. Poked the barrel of the gun through a hole.

An empty car trunk is pulled onstage like a wagon. Hanna is persuaded, she clambers in.

REPORTER: You were going to shoot this guy?

HANNA: (*getting into the trunk*) He cut off the dog's ass! Wouldn't you shoot someone who did that?

REPORTER: Then what?

Agla appears in the doorway.

AGLA: I was filling in for someone in Akureyri and got a dispatch about a distressed woman with a gun and a lot of bags of crisps in the trunk of a car. When I approached Hanna she was asleep. I woke her up and she sat up in the trunk.

REPORTER: Am I correct that you then both saw –

AGLA: A little dog running across the street. Lukas, the dog who was missing.

REPORTER: And he was totally fine?

AGLA: The dog was fine.

REPORTER: No razor wire, no one punched Lukas, no one tortured him, no one –

AGLA: The dog was fine. He ran back home.

REPORTER: (*to Hanna*) But you weren't fine.

HANNA: But I wasn't fine. It was so cold in the trunk. And I was sure that I was going to jail.

AGLA: I dragged her down to the station to question her.

HANNA: Agla brought me a red hot water bottle and put it on my lap, close to my belly. And she gave me tea. She had sliced ginger and put it in the tea. You only see them bring coffee and cigarettes on cop shows, but she brought tea, not Earl Grey or something but real tea, purple tea with ginger in a huge mug. Not a plastic cup, a real mug, not even chipped. And then she said:

AGLA: Sometimes cops get a little mixed up.

HANNA: As if I were a cop too. Which I was. Just for animals, you know. And then she said take a deep breath. And like, that's what everyone had always told me to do, acting classes, vocal coaches, yoga teachers, directors and that kind of thing, always just telling me to take a deep breath. But when Agla told me to take a deep breath it was like something opened up, and my whole body became an expanding lung. I could swear I breathed down into my toes, I could feel air inside my calves. And my hair. Then she asked:

AGLA: That gun was just a prop from the theatre, wasn't it?

HANNA: Of course it was a real gun, the guy had skinned this little dog and made a baseball cap out of his skin... according to the evidence. But she asked me again:

AGLA: This is just a toy gun, right?

HANNA: Yeah. (*Pause.*) But then the theatre heard about what happened. Someone drew a picture of me with bags of crisps and a toy gun and hung it in my dressing room. I quit acting. I don't even care. Only thing that bothers me is that no one was even afraid of me. No one believed I was dangerous.

AGLA: I believed it.

HANNA: You did?

REPORTER: So that's how you met? That's sort of sweet.

HANNA: Yeah.

REPORTER: (*to Agla*) But you began a relationship with an... unstable woman that you met on the job. What did your fellow officers say? Weren't you ashamed?

AGLA: Hanna made a mistake, but she made her own kind of mistake. She did what she wanted to do.

REPORTER: She wanted to kill a guy because she read on Facebook: Man tortures and kills a chihuahua...

AGLA: When was the last time you did something just because you wanted to?

REPORTER: Were you allowed to release her? It was a real gun. Isn't that a serious crime?

AGLA: I don't know.

REPORTER: Well, what do you know?

AGLA: I know this interview is over.

Agla tosses the reporter's recorder into the ice water.

REPORTER: Do you know that she has a syringe full of sperm?

AGLA: If you don't want it down your throat, you should leave now.

REPORTER: Do you want to have a child with her?

AGLA: Out, now!

REPORTER: I have a source who tells me that the daughter of the chief of police was placed on a leave of absence – why did your mom put you on leave?

Agla throws the Reporter out. Hanna opens a bottle of red wine and pours herself a glass.

AGLA: Why is our house filled with dead flowers?

HANNA: They were alive when I bought them.

AGLA: Were they for me?

HANNA: They are for you.

AGLA: Dead flowers?

HANNA: I bought them for you. You just haven't come home to put them in water so you killed them.

AGLA: And why was there a reporter in our house?

HANNA: We were going to make the baby today.

AGLA: That doesn't answer my question, why was there a reporter in our house?

HANNA: It's a very open process. We have nothing to hide.

AGLA: We have loads to hide.

HANNA: I don't.

AGLA: I'm a cop –

HANNA: ...on leave.

AGLA: And you're an actress on leave. We are not public personalities, you're not famous, you can't be famous in a country with a smaller population than Århus.

HANNA: I just thought that if you saw an interview with us, you know, sort of from the outside, then you'd see how we make a great couple and how this baby is going to –

AGLA: I'm not going to evaluate myself according to what some newspaper interview says about me.

HANNA: You'd rather go by what your mom says? Did you sleep at her place?

AGLA: No, I've just been in the car, driving and thinking.

Hanna tries to light a cigarette, but the lighter doesn't work. Agla takes the cigarette from Hanna, lights it and hands it back.

AGLA: I went to like a psychiatrist.

HANNA: No.

AGLA: Yes.

Pause.

HANNA: Seriously? You are amazing, Agla –

AGLA: He didn't think so. Says I've been collecting these fairytales, about me, Mom, Amma, you – soaking them up like a sponge. And now they're all swimming around inside me nonstop. Without the –

HANNA: And they all lived happily ever after, The End. You remember when I played Little Red Riding Hood?

AGLA: No.

HANNA: You never saw it?

AGLA: No, I think theatre is ridiculous.

HANNA: Little Red Riding Hood doesn't really make sense either. The grandmother's just a pervert, sleeping with the wolf and the hunter too. "The wolf ate the grandmother", we all know what that means. But Little Red Riding Hood has a happy ending.

AGLA: My fairytales don't have an ending. And like, it's as if I believe that if I do something really dramatic, something extreme enough, I can put an end to all these fairytales inside me.

HANNA: If you make a big change in your life?

AGLA: Yes, then in some way it would end them all. Then I could... relax.

Hanna fetches the syringe, pulls down her underwear and offers Agla the syringe.

HANNA: Do it. Squirt. *(Places Agla's hand on the syringe and points it toward her genitals).*

AGLA: This is not what I meant.

HANNA: Squirt, Agla!

Agla squirts the semen in Hanna's face.

AGLA: Fine, there you go!

Hanna wipes the semen off her face.

HANNA: Then what did you mean?

AGLA: It doesn't matter.

HANNA: Clearly it matters to you.

AGLA: You can't help me.

HANNA: I can, Agla.

AGLA: No.

HANNA: I forgot all about the tea.

AGLA: I wasn't the one who made it, it was this gay guy at the station who was feeling sorry for you, I just brought it in.

HANNA: You made the tea.

AGLA: No.

HANNA: In my memory, it was you.

AGLA: And is that enough?

HANNA: For me. And the toy gun thing, you freed me from a spell, Agla. And then you taught me how to breathe. You gave me oxygen. *(She breathes in deep)* Flowing out of you and inside me. You stream into me. Do you know what I would give to be allowed to blow a little back to you? One breath from me to you?

AGLA: You can't give me what I'm thinking about.

HANNA: Yes I can. Just because you're closed up, you think people don't know who you are.

Hanna takes Agla's hands in hers, kisses them and places them around her neck. She kisses Agla gently on the lips and closes her eyes. Agla starts to tighten her grip on Hanna's throat. Hanna does not resist. Agla strangles her harder, but then all of a sudden releases Hanna, who gasps for air.

HANNA: You big loser!

Pause.

HANNA: Finish it!

AGLA: It's not even going to help.

HANNA: As if you want any help.

AGLA: I think you should go.

HANNA: You're a loser, Agla.

AGLA: You should go.

HANNA: Fairytale ending, full of fairytales. Listen to this bullshit! Little Red Riding Hood, Agla, had a basket full of food and an expensive hood. She should have skipped along, far away from home, away from the miserable forest to go have some fun, tell her grandma and that horny wolf and her passive aggressive mother to go fuck themselves!

AGLA: Go.

Hanna leaves. Agla goes to turn on the shower. She undresses; Cop #1 appears in the doorway.

COP #1: Alrighty. So we're sure this is the right... course of action?

AGLA: He's in the car?

COP #1: You know, it wouldn't be any problem to call it off.

AGLA: Bring him in.

COP #1: Yeah. But you know I'll get fired if he tells someone?

AGLA: Thank you. I read online that if I play out the scene again but with a different ending, then it's over.

Agla gets in the shower. Cop #1 goes out and returns with a masked, handcuffed man. Agla comes out of the bathroom wearing a towel.

AGLA: (to Cop #1) Take off the cuffs. Go outside, and I'm going to watch you drive away.

COP #1: Okay, but this is all your responsibility.

AGLA: Yeah.

Agla takes her position, recalling where she was at the time of the break-in. The man speaks through a voice changer.

AGLA: You were standing more like this.

MAN: (voice changed) You sure?

AGLA: Maybe more like this.

MAN: Don't you remember me?

AGLA: You weren't using that stupid voice changer.

MAN: I was. What would you make of a victim who can't even remember if her alleged attacker used a voice changer at the scene or not? A victim who couldn't remember where the man was standing...

AGLA: Just stand there.

MAN: And you stood there. Weren't acting like a cop. You were just being you.

AGLA: Where did I stand?

MAN: Further back.

AGLA: No.

MAN: No? I thought you said this was the only thing on your mind since I was standing here and –

AGLA: Stand wherever you want and start jerking off when I come out of the bathroom.

Agla walks backwards into the bathroom, takes a deep breath and comes back out. The Man does nothing.

MAN: I don't want to.

AGLA: Do it.

MAN: How about you do it this time? I can watch.

Agla lets the towel drop.

AGLA: Do it.

MAN: You have to get me going.

AGLA: Have you thought about me?

MAN: Yes.

AGLA: I thought about you too.

MAN: Okay, tell me about it.

AGLA: Does that get you going?

MAN: I don't know, maybe.

AGLA: You break in, stand there, see me, start jerking off like you own the parquet floor you're going to come on. Even though I'm the one with the overdraft from the cost of laying that floor. If I attack you, you'll probably laugh it off. Suddenly I'm made of glass, you see right through me and I can't move.

MAN: Good, more.

AGLA: You're radiating masculinity. Not a positive energy, not negative, but it's real, it's authentic. And then I feel that my masculinity, my power is just pretend and it melts away. You don't back down, so it's safest for me to melt into immovable glass. (*Small pause*). But you're much shorter than I remember.

MAN: Are you trying to humiliate me?

AGLA: Doesn't look like you need any help with that.

The Man starts masturbating. Agla laughs.

MAN: Shut up.

AGLA: Cut the bullshit.

Agla walks towards him.

MAN: Don't come any closer.

Agla walks up to the Man and removes his hood to reveal Cop #2 who has been pretending to be Agla's attacker.

COP #2: We couldn't just arrest the guy and leave him with you! *Sorry!*

AGLA: You were very convincing...

COP #2: Thanks. I took an acting class or like this clowning class and it –

AGLA: Kind of like you meant every word you were saying...

COP #2: You have to side with the character you're acting or the clown.

AGLA: Clearly. But why weren't you on my side?

COP #2: What do you think I'm trying to do here?

AGLA: You didn't want to be my partner.

COP #2: Your mom just transferred me.

AGLA: You asked for a transfer. I was never difficult when we were on shifts together.

COP #2: Agla. You wanted me to pick up the man who attacked you, to do what? So you could beat him up, kill him? I can't be partners with somebody like that.

AGLA: That's not why you asked for a transfer.

COP #2: Come on, Agla, what are you doing? I show up here like an idiot trying to help you.

We used to be so tight, but then one day I just really wanted to –

AGLA: Tell me, what did you want to do...

COP #2: Shove my cock inside you, spoiled little brat.

AGLA: Yeah, but you also want to leave your wife and take me to the mall and to some miserable country house and wee in the jacuzzi and run your fingers through my hair and barbecue some stupid meat.

COP #2: And then shove my cock inside you, you spoiled brat.

AGLA: Fag.

COP #2: Shut up.

Pause.

AGLA: Am I just whining?

COP #2: Can't fucking stand you.

AGLA: Self pity?

COP #2: Raging. Which is totally... unnecessary.

AGLA: Why?

COP #2: Because you're, like, when you're not whining and fucking full of –

AGLA: Yes.

COP #2: Then you're so... magically... huge... I think about you all day, still have no idea what you're on about but I think you –

Agla gives Cop #2 a long kiss.

She grabs the bottle of wine that Hanna was drinking from and pours a glass for herself and Cop #2. They empty their glasses, kiss again, Agla finishes the bottle and she and Cop #2 have sex. The apartment fills with people, the party begins.

And soon: cigarette butts, empty bottles, dust, speed and all kinds of junk rain down from the ceiling, filling Agla and Hanna's home, which transforms into a pile of rubbish.

Act Three



A few weeks later, Agla has just woken up on top of a pile of rubbish. She checks a few bottles and finds dregs in one, which she downs. She produces some speed from a pocket, does a bump and lights a cigarette. In barges Edda, dressed in black with a little handbag. Fridgeir follows behind.

EDDA: Well, if it isn't the employee of the month...

AGLA: Why are you wearing black?

EDDA: Because I'm mourning my life.

AGLA: No, seriously, why are you all in black. I'm not dead?

EDDA: We are burying your grandmother, she died last week. And I told you about it then.

And yesterday. And you promised to get it together. But I knew you wouldn't get it together so here's an iPad and there's Zoom on the iPad. You can watch the funeral live on there.

AGLA: I can't come with you?

EDDA: In this state, no.

AGLA: Instead of grieving your mother, you put your energy into being ashamed of me.

Make sure no one finds out.

EDDA: No, Agla, I've been around drunk and doped-up women my whole life. No secrets there. But if I don't say stop, if I don't tell you "no" then you'll crush me up and suck me up your nose. You're all very sick and so on. I know that. But the behaviour and the attitude is dangerous. You're dangerous, Amma was dangerous. And that's why, when you ask me to help you get dressed, to wipe your face, find you a clean black dress to wear and buy you a sandwich on the way... that's what you're asking me?

AGLA: Can we do that?

EDDA: Then I say stop. No. You're going to have to find your own sandwich. And maybe I wasn't the warmest mother in the world but it's just too late. If I start being warm now you're just going to turn into a seven-year-old. And when you feel like you're seven you become dangerous, because seven-year-old you doesn't take any responsibility.

AGLA: Wow, Mommy's got this all figured out.

EDDA: Yes, that's what you need to do when your family is insane. You prepare your answers so that you don't get angry and say something hurtful. Don't say the things you want to say.

AGLA: A matter of law and order.

EDDA: It is, Agla.

AGLA: You may only be loved if you follow the rules. Don't you think that's odd?

EDDA: (*laughs*) You don't give much credit to the human race, Agla. My love for you is a constant. It doesn't fluctuate, you can't even try to weaponise it, it's just this massive deep purple blob. But while you choose this insanity here, then I'm going to show you the respect to let you do that. You can destroy your life, that's your human right. But I'm not going to help you do it.

AGLA: Then what am I supposed to do?

EDDA: I don't know.

Edda prepares to leave.

AGLA: (*to Fridgeir*) Why don't you say anything? What are you even doing here?

FRIDGEIR: Waiting.

AGLA: For what?

FRIDGEIR: For you to be healthy again, because I have this book –

AGLA: Sure, the book about poop. (*Pause.*) How's it coming along?

FRIDGEIR: The book about poop is also waiting for you to get healthy so we can finish it together.

Edda and Fridgeir exit, but Agla calls after them.

AGLA: Come back after the funeral, I promise I'll try to...

Edda and Fridgeir are gone. Agla collapses onto a pile of rubbish, does a line of coke off the iPad, tosses it aside and lies down. Immediately, a song begins to play as if from underneath the pile, and Agla sits up and searches everywhere for where the sound is coming from. The song in question is Moon of Alabama by Kurt Weill: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-5ata4jDyk>

AMMA: (singing) Oh, show us the way to the next whiskey bar

PRINCESSES: Oh, don't ask why, no, don't ask why

AMMA: For we must find the next whiskey bar

For if we don't find the next whiskey bar

PRINCESSES: I tell you we must die, I tell you we must die

I tell you, I tell you, I tell you we must die

Amma Malla rises from one of the rubbish piles wearing a pink swimsuit and high heels, with great blonde hair and enormous, crude wings. The Icelandic Princesses follow along behind her.

AMMA: Oh, moon of Alabama, it's time to say goodbye

We've lost our good old mama

And must have whiskey or you know why

Oh, moon of Alabama, it's time to say goodbye

We've lost our good old mama

And must have whiskey or you know why

Oh, show us the way to the next little dollar

PRINCESSES: Oh, don't ask why, oh, don't ask why

AMMA: For we must find the next little dollar

For if we don't find the next little dollar

PRINCESSES: I tell you we must die, I tell you we must die

TOGETHER: I tell you, I tell you, I tell you we must die

AMMA: Oh, moon of Alabama, it's...

AGLA: (trying to calm herself) This is all part of the grieving process, it is definitely normal that –

AMMA: That your Amma and four more Icelandic Princesses show up with wings on, rise up from a pile of garbage and sing you a song?

AGLA: Yes.

AMMA: No, baby, you're a goner.

AGLA: Please, God, help, help help.

AMMA: (*looks around, picks up some rubbish and lets it fall to the floor*) A slob would tell you that if you don't clean the house for four years, it can't get any dirtier – in four years' time there's no point cleaning it anymore. But you don't have to think about that. Now you're coming with Amma. Come on, honey.

AGLA: Where?

AMMA: I'm allowed to take you along, you don't have to deal with this any longer.

AGLA: Wait... am I going to die? How?

AMMA: Like this. You're just finished, kind of like a joke. Then a pile of energy or souls or whatnot comes to you from the beyond and picks you up, just like a pizza. We're your pile.

AGLA: You are?

AMMA: Yes.

FANNEY: And you're the pizza.

AGLA: Oh man.

FANNEY: Beggars can't be choosers, sweetie pie.

AMMA: I knew some of the people who came for me but the others said they'd always been following me around, trying to help me.

AGLA: Didn't go so well for them.

AMMA: That's what I said.

AGLA: And since *you* have wings on, I'm assuming there is no such thing as Hell.

AMMA: By golly, you're just as clever as your Amma. That's what I asked them: How come I haven't even felt a hot wind hit me?

AGLA: And?

AMMA: It turns out, Hell isn't like that. Hell is believing that there is a Hell. Believing life is Hell, that's Hell.

AGLA: So it doesn't exist?

AMMA: Not quite?

AGLA: But Amma, you made life Hell for other people! Mom waited her whole childhood for you to come home and you said you were on your way, but you never came. As if

you didn't have the time. That's Hell. And then that Hell somehow possesses everything and you soak it up.

AMMA: You know, I thought I was going to wake up in Hell and I was just going to make the best of it, so hot, light a ciggie, barbecue. Nope. They made me sleep for a thousand years, told me I was tired.

AGLA: A thousand years, you died last week?

AMMA: Yes, time is only a joke too, just like Hell. Didn't know that either. And this stuff about being crazy. Also a joke. One just takes a peek into other dimensions, like you're doing right now, nothing abnormal about it.

EYGLO: Crazy people just have better eyesight.

AMMA: Eyglo, listen, will you stop your endless goddamn yapping! I get it on with an American G.I., what does Eyglo do? She becomes an Icelandic Princess too. I stop drinking vodka Cokes and start drinking vodka waters and lose 23 kilos. What does Eyglo do? Starts drinking vodka waters and loses 24 kilos. And then what happens? I die and what does Eyglo decide to do? Obviously, she dies too and if that wasn't enough, she shows up in my Heaven!

AGLA: But if you're in Heaven, why aren't you happy?

AMMA: Now, listen, I come down here from Heaven and you interrogate me like some real personality. You never even came to say goodbye!

AGLA: I relapsed.

AMMA: Yes, a few weeks ago, you, why didn't you come before that?

AGLA: Because you mess with my head. You make me feel guilty and like I'm always doing the wrong thing.

AMMA: Sounds like Hell.

AGLA: Really, something stupid like that?

AMMA: Yes.

Silence.

AGLA: I needed to have you just a little longer.

AMMA: I didn't really have to die. See, my left foot was ruined, from the cigarettes, wasn't anything to do with the liquor, and the doctors said: If we amputate, you'll live to see a hundred.

AGLA: Why didn't you do it?

AMMA: And do what with my high heels? I've got 82 pairs.

AGLA: You died because you didn't want to stop wearing heels?

AMMA: Was I supposed to hop around on one heel? Sell the other one?

A crooner starts to sing Say The Things you Used to Say at the funeral.

AMMA: Isn't he a dream, what a personality. Well, baby, now you're coming with us girls.

FANNEY: (*yelling*) Coming from Keflavík, all the way from Florida, on their way to

Heaven: The Icelandic Princesses!!!

Amma Malla and the Princesses are trying to pull Agla with them off the stage when the Psychiatrist enters the apartment.

PSYCHIATRIST: Look, Agla. I've been going over my method and –

FANNEY: This one's definitely got the hots for me.

AGLA: (*pulling away from the women*) Wait a minute, Amma.

AMMA: Baby, dying is no big deal. You won't be punished, you don't even have to ask for forgiveness.

FANNEY: I came for your Amma and they had me tell her: "Magdalena, you were forgiven a long time ago." Your mother. The whole world's forgiven your Amma and even me. Our task, before we move on, is to accept it.

AGLA: Accept what?

FANNEY: Forgiveness.

AGLA: Being dead sounds like a lot of work.

AMMA: It's the pits. And you can't take a drink, not a snort of liquor, because you don't have a body so you don't feel any difference.

AGLA: I thought you said you weren't in Hell.

AMMA: Yes, you mean that's the real Hell, never getting hammered again.

AGLA: Yeah, for me and you.

PSYCHIATRIST: Who are you talking to, Agla?

AMMA: I was so proud when you quit drinking. Couldn't believe someone with my genes could do it.

AGLA: I could never stop again, don't even want to.

AMMA: I know.

AGLA: I'm coming with you and we can accept forgiveness together.

AMMA: Yes.

Pause.

FANNEY: Malla honey, tell it like it is...

AMMA: Okay, Fanny honey, what kind of wind has hit you? Baby, see, you can come with us... but you don't have to. And I don't even care to bring you with me, I have my hands full with Eyglo. Eyglo, should I tell you what? No.

AGLA: But I'm so tired.

Fanny hands Agla a mirror with speed on it and they both do a line.

AMMA: Look at your mother.

Edda is sitting on a chair at the funeral, Hanna is next to her.

AMMA: Even at my funeral, she's waiting for me to come and take her in my arms.

EYGLO: Malla won't even show up for her own funeral.

AMMA: You know what Eyglo, you got a two-faced personality and –

AGLA: Keep going.

AMMA: Look at my girl, she's not angry at mommy, she's forgiven me already, she's just anticipating. Because she's waiting for you too. *(Reveals Hanna who is sitting beside Edda)* They are waiting for you, not for the perfect cop or someone who can save them, but the clear, pure thing – the calm that lives here inside your chest. Under there, or underneath all the unhappy fairytales, you're right as rain.

AGLA: I'm coming with you.

AMMA: You don't need to come with me, I'm already here with you. Everyone is with you.

AGLA: Do I have to go... what... through?

AMMA: Not around, not under, through.

FANNEY: Let's go!

PSYCHIATRIST: I'm sorry, Agla, are you on the phone or?

AGLA: *(to Malla)* And what if I need help?

AMMA: Then you look out that window, Agla, and you see a soft, pink light – that's me shining.

AGLA: Soft, pink light?

AMMA: That's where I'll be, baby.

Amma Malla and the other Princesses disappear in an instant.

AGLA: Amma!

PSYCHIATRIST: There's one more fairytale. You owe me one fairytale.

AGLA: Hey, you're in my house, only my family is allowed to come in here to give me grief and attitude, not some drunk off the street! Get the hell out!

PSYCHIATRIST: Went through six, you have one left.

AGLA: Please, pick on your own children!

PSYCHIATRIST: We need to finish off these stories, then we'll know for certain that the method works.

AGLA: I'm not your lab rat!

PSYCHIATRIST: One must attempt, one must experiment.

AGLA: Or else what?

PSYCHIATRIST: Or else we just give up.

The Psychiatrist hands Agla a bottle of vodka, she turns it down but he takes a swig.

AGLA: How about you tell me a fairytale?

PSYCHIATRIST: You promise to tell one in return?

AGLA: If you tell the truth.

PSYCHIATRIST: Once upon a time there was a psychiatrist who had a son who was quite a lot like you except he wanted to be an author and write stories and fairytales. The psychiatrist didn't care for stories and fairytales – didn't get the point of them, thought his son's attempts at art were laughable and found the boy a bit of an embarrassment. The psychiatrist tried to stay in contact but one day the son asked the psychiatrist to just leave him in peace. Do you know what the psychiatrist did? He just left his son in peace. But the son couldn't find any peace and soon after he just gave up and... Before I ever gave him the chance to tell me his story. And now, Agla, you owe me a fairytale.

AGLA: I've already told you everything.

PSYCHIATRIST: About everything around you.

AGLA: But what happens around me has an effect on me.

PSYCHIATRIST: Yes, but it isn't you. I need the fairytale of you.

AGLA: Starting?

PSYCHIATRIST: Starting now, the tale of what is happening right now.

AGLA: Look around, I've wrecked my house. Drunk. I think I got a new tattoo.

Pause.

PSYCHIATRIST: You know, after the Twin Towers were attacked in New York, an experiment was conducted with children. Two groups. Children who were, well, either unaffected or traumatized, in other words, sick kids and healthy kids. Three days after the attack the children were asked to draw a picture of what had happened. The sick ones drew airplanes flying into the towers, fire, death, suffering and in some drawings there were three towers and even more airplanes.

AGLA: Smart kids, reasonable, telling the truth.

PSYCHIATRIST: The healthy children were also asked to draw a picture. In their drawings the airplanes hit the towers, just like in the sick kids' drawings. But the healthy children added things to the drawings, things like dragons that saved the people who threw themselves out of the window. Or a trampoline for the people to jump onto. Some of them had parachutes. Sometimes they were caught by angels. Essentially, they gave the fairytale a happy ending.

AGLA: But the fairytale didn't have a happy ending. These healthy kids were idiots.

PSYCHIATRIST: Yes, and that's what makes them healthy. Now try to tell me one last fairytale and make sure it's –

AGLA: Idiotic?

PSYCHIATRIST: Hit me!

AGLA: Once upon a time there was Agla. She blew up her life in a couple of weeks and didn't really know why. Then a psychiatrist arrived who wasn't exactly sober and he couldn't help her. Then Amma died. And then I was supposed to make up a fairytale with a happy ending.

The Psychiatrist takes a sip of wine.

PSYCHIATRIST: I once had a client, a theologian, a professor at the university. He was voted the most boring professor of the semester in the school paper, a title he thought suited him fine seeing as he couldn't connect to his students at all. But one Monday morning, the theologian came to work and sat behind the desk while his students settled into their seats. He opened his computer. But instead of his boring slides and his boring notes, there was a porn video playing onscreen.

AGLA: What did the students say?

PSYCHIATRIST: They couldn't see onto the computer, only he could see the screen. And this wasn't softcore, it was real porn.

AGLA: So he closed the laptop?

PSYCHIATRIST: No. Because it invigorated him. The danger that the students would see onto the screen fired up the theologian. He didn't close the laptop. He didn't die of shame. No, he shushes his students and starts teaching theology like it's never been taught before. Full of vigor, excitement, madness, joy for the written word. In three weeks his class size grew sevenfold. Everyone loved the professor who pulsed with life. Instead of falling prey to shame, the theologian transformed it into energy – made a friend out of it.

Fridgeir, Edda and Hanna enter.

FRIDGEIR: I could always leave the pages blank, no text, just the turd pictures.

EDDA: Wouldn't people just walk into a public bathroom if they wanted to see that?

FRIDGEIR: Yes, that's the genius thing you see, it's all shit, every turd, all the same, shiny nuggets – there's no need for words.

PSYCHIATRIST: Agla, just try. We're listening.

EDDA: No, I'm here to talk.

Edda prepares to leave hastily.

FRIDGEIR: Wait a minute Edda, let's try listening.

AGLA: I'm just going to make something up. Lie.

FRIDGEIR: You should always take people at their word, especially when they lie.

A card appears on the stage with the following information for the audience:

Fairytale #7

The Crown

AGLA: Where I see wolves, evil stepmothers, boogeymen there are just people, even a strange psychiatrist who is trying to tell me that I can wear my shame like a crown. I can't feel this love that you're trying to show to me... it's as if it gets lost on its way through the woods and can't find its way over to me. And that's the thing that I am most ashamed of. I have a membrane around me that keeps me from feeling anything, shields me like a veil. Mom, you were always so angry and hurt. I thought that if I grew an invisible veil I wouldn't have to be angry and hurt like you, and that if I wasn't ever angry and hurt then maybe it would rub off on you, or maybe I could even help you forgive. The veil blocked out all the bad feelings, but also the good ones. Then that guy broke in and I froze naked underneath the veil and it hit me... it's just a veil, a thin veil that can't protect me from anything. I guess the veil is the fairytale, something make-believe that didn't work, didn't protect me.

PSYCHIATRIST: Maybe because you don't need all that protection.

AGLA: I see that you are trying to give me love, it's flowing out of you like pink light. Even from you, Mom, most of all you, Mom.

EDDA: Are you telling me that at the age of thirty-eight you are realizing for the first time that your mom loves you?

AGLA: I knew already, but now it's like I have to believe it's true, you all proved it.

EDDA: We don't need to prove it to you.

AGLA: No, I mean, you showed it –

EDDA: As we always have.

AGLA: Okay, I saw it. I saw it.

EDDA: And what will you do, now that you see it?

AGLA: I think I don't know how to accept it, I might learn how. But I see it. Isn't this strange?

EDDA: It's something.

PSYCHIATRIST: And they all lived happily ever after, The End.

Pause.

AGLA: Did I get through?

PSYCHIATRIST: Yes. I mean, you will have to go through drug treatment as well –

AGLA: Won't you join me?

PSYCHIATRIST: No, Margret would never –

EDDA: I had you checked out, you drove drunk into a hot dog stand recently.

FRIDGEIR: What is this, Edda, the man must have been hungry. *(to Psychiatrist)* You... thanks.

EDDA: If this is one more manipulation, one more show, Agla, I'm going to come here tomorrow with a cattle gun and put you down like a dog. Understand?

AGLA: Yes.

EDDA: You'll sort yourself out?

AGLA: Yes.

EDDA: I'm not helping you.

AGLA: Thank you. I mean it. But you can keep an eye on me.

EDDA: I'll consider it.

The Psychiatrist, Edda and Fridgeir get ready to leave while Hanna starts trying to clean up.

A card appears on the stage with the following information for the audience:

... And an Opera of Shame

HANNA: I'll vacuum.

AGLA: Thank you. But –

HANNA: And then I'll mop.

AGLA: I think I have to deep-clean the couch maybe...

HANNA: Yes, please don't tell me why, I'll just deep-clean it. Rent a steamer from the hardware store, I can rent it for two days. The day is only 5000 krona, maybe more, it's been a long time since I rented out one of those machines. Maybe 7000.

Agla takes Hanna by the throat, softly.

AGLA: Are you afraid of me?

HANNA: Yes.

AGLA: When will you stop being afraid?

HANNA: I'm trying.

AGLA: How is it going?

HANNA: Well, because it's better to be afraid of you than for you. It's easier for me to handle.

AGLA: And our kids?

HANNA: They'll learn how to handle you.

AGLA: I don't seem changed to you?

HANNA: Sure, sure you do, sure, wow, you've changed a lot.

AGLA: No, I changed a tiny little bit. But I want to change a lot.

HANNA: Then I'll change with you.

AGLA: That wouldn't be much of a change.

HANNA: You want to kill me, I'm okay with it, you get loaded, I move out, give you space, come back, deep-clean the couch – you make all my decisions for me. But I won't let you decide this. You cannot break up with me.

AGLA: Look, I love you but –

HANNA: What are you doing? You're messing with my head!

AGLA: Okay, I'm really sorry but –

HANNA: This too. You're messing with me!

AGLA: What do you want me to say?

HANNA: I want you to talk to me... but don't say anything.

Pause.

AGLA: Bloop, bloop, bloop.

HANNA: Yes just like that, and I decide what you mean.

AGLA: You're joking?

HANNA: No. Keep going.

AGLA: Bloop bloop bloop, bloop bloop.

HANNA: Do you really think so?

AGLA: Uhh, bloop.

HANNA: Thank you. Can't you picture us at a pee-wee soccer game, maybe you're even coaching?

AGLA: Bloop bloop.

HANNA: Well, yeah, perhaps. Tennis could be more like it.

AGLA: Bloop. Bleep. Bloop. Bloop.

HANNA: Good question. Most people fantasize about getting fucked in the bathroom at work or something. I don't. I've always fantasized about normal things. Flower markets. Bus terminals. Minivans. Making plans to buy a new bathroom sink and then not doing it. Like that. In theatre school I loved playing the wife or the nice mom who's kneading dough. The others all wanted to play bitches. I played Lyuba in the Cherry Orchard like she was mumma bear because mumma bear is so nice. I want to empty out the pockets of your jeans before I put them into the washing machine. You can talk normally again but can you do one thing?

AGLA: Bloop.

HANNA: Make an effort. Let's pretend we're considerate, tender. (*Hesitates*) Hi.

AGLA: Hi.

HANNA: Beautiful earrings you're wearing.

AGLA: I'm not wearing earrings, my ears aren't even pierced.

HANNA: Make an effort.

AGLA: Thanks. You gave them to me.

HANNA: Yes, I gave you those earrings.

AGLA: Right.

HANNA: And that's why we have to be together.

AGLA: And if we were together, what would we do?

HANNA: Listen.

AGLA: To what?

HANNA: Nothing important.

Total silence while Agla and Hanna listen. The whole theatre listens with them. They don't speak a word until a creak in the floor is heard, or an audience member clears their throat, etc.

AGLA: There it was!

HANNA: Did you hear that?

AGLA: Yes.

They listen until they and the audience hear another sound.

AGLA: And that.

HANNA: And that. Is that sound coming from the audience?

AGLA: Yes.

HANNA: Wow.

AGLA: Almost like music.

HANNA: Yes, it's beautiful.

They listen for any sound.

AGLA: Like an opera.

HANNA: Yes, like an opera!

AGLA: Everyone is trying so hard not to make a sound. That's what the opera is about.

They wait for a sound.

HANNA: Yeah, an opera of shame.

AGLA: Yeah, still an opera.

HANNA: My favorite opera so far. (*Hesitates*) Then is it time for me to go?

A pink light is lit.

AGLA: Let's listen a little longer.

The pink light intensifies. Everyone listens.

The pink light quickly and furiously envelops the stage and then the whole theatre. Then it disappears in an instant.

Pitch black.