



# CAMINO

by

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**KEN** Mo's husband. Mid thirties - early forties

**MO** Ken's wife. Mid thirties – early forties

**HELEN** Donald's wife. Late forties or older

**DONALD** Helen's husband. Late forties or older

*The time is the present.*

*The action takes place at resting places and refuges along the Camino - very, very simple, stylized settings; the refuges (in practice one refuge set, maybe slightly redressed, maybe with a succession of sign/signposts – Santamaria 80km. Santamaria 65kms etc) containing two double bunks or pallets; the resting places are simple blocks or benches or somesuch in limbo .*

## **SCENE I**

*Music – No Cure For Love, Aaron Neville*

*A mountain refuge. Two very basic bunk beds against the back wall. KEN and MO are looking at their their phones, A long silence*

**MO:** Are you getting wifi?

**KEN:** No.

**MO:** So this is it?

**KEN:** I guess

**MO** (*wearily, not looking up.*) Happy anniversary

**KEN:** (*mumbles, not looking up*) Happy anniversary,.

*Mo puts her earphones in, starts humming quietly gets out her diary, starts writing. Ken opens a brochure., starts reading out loud*

**KEN:** Here we are. “The remote shrine of Santamaria Caramonte -

*MO takes out her earbuds*

**MO:** Sorry - Did you say something

**KEN:** “The remote shrine of Santamaria Caramonte, (Patron Saint of Misunderstandings and Spiritual Refreshment ) lies high up in the Spanish Pyrenees etc etc.. Determined pilgrims have made their way there since the 12<sup>th</sup> century in order to rebalance and renew their relationships in picturesque surroundings etc etc. Five days, simple self-catering accommodation in mountain refuges. Graded medium to difficult .-There’s a reliquary,.

*She takes the buds out again*

**MO:** What?

**KEN:** There’s a relic,.

**MO:** What is it?

**KEN:** I’m not sure. Looks like a prune.

*He closes the brochure*

**MO :** Why are we doing this?

**KEN:** Your idea.

**MO:** No, it wasn’t.



**MO:** Bronwyn. Her number's still on your phone by the way. After all these years. Fancy that. This isn't working, Kenneth.

**KEN:** (*Mockingly*) This isn't working, Kenneth.

**MO:** Stop it !

**KEN:** Aaaaagh. Aaagh Aaagh Aaaggh Grrrr etc

*He punches the mattress. Meanwhile Donald and Helen enter unobserved. They too wear Camino-branded hats and/or T shirts, plus shorts, walking boots, etc; they have backpacks and walking poles. Helen looks chaotic, Donald very well equipped and well organised. A large soft toy hangs off his back-pack. They stand and stare.*

**MO:** Oh for God's sake, Ken - you can do better than that. With feeling !  
(*Dramatically*) Aaaaaagh! Aaaaaagh! Grr! grr! -

*Ken claps sarcastically*

**KEN:** Bravo bravo bravo prima donna

**MO:** Louder! Aaaaagh ! Aaaagh !

**KEN:** La la la la la la

**MO** Oh shut –

*Mo clocks Donald and Helen*

- Hi.

*Ken stops clapping , freezes.*

**KEN:** Hi.

**MO:** Can we help you?

*Helen stares hard at Mo*

**HELEN:** Are you OK?

**MO:** I'm fine. ..we were just...

*She waves her arms hopelessly*

**KEN:** err...

**MO:** ..celebrating.

**KEN:** It's our wedding anniversary.

*Helen looks at Ken, then at Mo, then at Ken again. Donald helps Helen off with her back pack.*

**HELEN:** It's your wedding anniversary? God what a coincidence. Ours too. Well well well. How many years?

**KEN:** Ten. And you?

**HELEN** Twenty five. The first fifteen were the hardest. I'm joking . I don't think we ever had a serious angry moment, did we Tiger? I'm Helen, by the way. This is Donald.

*Donald nods.*

**MO:** Mo.

*Donald lifts some of Ken's possessions off his bunk, places them neatly on the floor beside Mo*

**KEN:** Ken. (To Donald) What are you doing?

**HELEN:** (Cheerfully) We're your room mates

*Long pause. Donald gestures Ken to move, places his soft toy on the bed*

**MO:** I'm sorry?

**HELEN:** Room mates. A bit of a squeeze but I'm sure we can manage

**MO:** Hold on, I think someone must have made a mistake. We booked a room on our own.(To Ken ) Didn't we?

*Donald starts to unpack his stuff, arranges it very very neatly on the bed,*

**KEN:** (Mumbles) It's a camino, it's a communal thing. They don't do separate rooms

**MO:** Are you serious? Thanks for telling me.

**KEN:** It's only five or six days.

**HELEN:** You don't mind, do you?

**MO:** (Shouts) Taxi!

*Mo waves her arms*

Taxi!

**HELEN::** We wouldn't be a nuisance, would we, Tiger?

**DONALD:** Sorry?

**HELEN:** I said we wouldn't be in their way. You'll probably be better with the green top tomorrow

**DONALD:** Whatever you say, Mrs Mouse

*A poignant silence. Mo snaps out of it*

**MO:** (*Mock cheerfully*) Mind? Mind? Why would me mind? Of course we don't, do we, Mr Cabbage?

**KEN:** Your call, sweetheart.

**MO:** This is great! We can all celebrate together! (*Sings*) We're all going on a summer holiday...

*Mo gives Ken an exaggerated hug and a sloppy kiss Donald puts his arm round Helen, she nestles into his shoulder, he pecks her on the head.*

**MO:** You've no objection if I take the upper bunk, do you Mr Turnip? You used to prefer me on top, I seem to remember.

**KEN:** Back in the day, Mrs Fruitbat, back in the day.

*Helen starts unpacking; tosses stuff on the bed. Donald tidies it up.*

**HELEN:** Is this your first camino, Ken?

**KEN:** Yes.

**HELEN:** Are you nervous?

**KEN:** Yes.

**HELEN:** What are you hoping for?

**KEN:** Closure.

**HELEN:** You don't mean that.

**KEN:** That's what she called it

**MO::** I didn't. But it's true. (*Cheerfully*) A long goodbye, with blisters.

*She does a goodbye wave, blows him a kiss.*

**HELEN:** That's the saddest thing I've ever heard. Maybe it won't turn out that way. God moves in a mysterious way.

**KEN:** Doesn't he just.

**HELEN:** Sometimes we need to sink down as low as we can before we can start climbing back up.

**KEN:** And vice versa.

**DONALD:** I'm sorry?

**KEN:** Heh, he can speak! Welcome aboard , Hamster.

**MO:** *(to Helen)* Sorry about this. He's not in a good place-

**KEN:** What I mean, Poodle, is the higher you climb up the tree of happiness, the bigger the fall back down to the bottom, apparently.

**DONALD:** *(very flat')* The tree of happiness. That's very funny.

**HELEN:** Do you mind if I make a suggestion?

*No-one replies*

Before you say anything to each other count to ten and then say the exact opposite.

*Ken mouths down to ten*

**KEN:** Don't go fuck yourself.

**HELEN:** *(Patronisingly)* Very good. Very good! *(To Donald)* Have you got the oil of cloves with you, Tiger?

**DONALD** Is that tooth still bothering you?

**HELEN** No, no , it'll be fine.

*He produces one, she wipes her face, hands it back to him*

Have you trained much for this?

**KEN:** Not really. I play a bit of clock golf. Mo joined a yoga class last year but I don't think she actually went - did you Mrs Spongecake? I think it clashed with Corrie.

**MO:** Eastenders.

**KEN:** My mistake. Eastenders.

*Donald holds up his walking boots, demonstrates their strength*

**DONALD:** We did three week-ends in the Cairngorms. And a First Responders workshop in Glenrothes

*Ken and Mo exchange looks. Donald produces a packet of energy bars*

Energy. Dried guava, pulled pigeon and shredded palm husk. A single bite contains over 400 calories.

*He offers Ken a bar. Ken examines it, hands it back*

**KEN:** No thanks. I'm taking Mrs Python out for a surprise anniversary dinner .

**HELEN:** Oh that's so sweet.

**MO:** You'd be welcome to join us, wouldn't they, Crocodile?

**DONALD:** That's very kind but we wouldn't want to cramp your style.

**HELEN:** Be nice to each other

*Ken and Mo exit. Donald and Helen finish unpacking*

**DONALD:** Did you want to go?

**HELEN:** We'd probably just be in the way.

**DONALD:** I'd rather be alone with you

**HELEN:** Me too

*They look into each others' eyes, then embrace*

**DONALD:** Aren't we lucky .

**HELEN:** Oh Tiger

**DONALD:** Oh Mouse

**HELEN:** Eeeek!

**DONALD:** Miaow

**HELEN:** Eeek!

**DONALD:** Miaow!

*He sings, very sweetly...*

If you were the only girl in the world

*They dance together.*

**HELEN:** And you were the only boy

**DONALD::** Nothing else would matter in the world today

**HELEN:** We would be together in the same old way

*They harmonise together*

A garden of Eden

Just built for two

With nothing to mar our joy...

I'm so happy to be here Tiger

**DONALD:** So am I, Mrs Mouse

*They sit, her head on his shoulder*

**HELEN:** Tell me something about me that really irritates you.

**DONALD:** Ummmm. OK.OK - let's see. When you pretend not to be annoyed when you are.

**HELEN:** But I'm not. You think I ought to be but I'm not. I'm really not.

**DONALD:** Does that annoy you?

**HELEN:** Yes, it annoys me that you think I ought to be annoyed that you're not annoyed. (*ironically*)It makes me really, really angry.

**DONALD:** I never really saw the point of anger.

**HELEN:** (*Mock angry*) That's just bloody typical! You're such a - such a - such a - thin-gamy. .

**DONALD:** You know what your problem is. You're...you're...umm...you're...a ..a ...wotsit

**HELEN:** *I'm a wotsit??*

**DONALD:** Yes. A complete wotsit

**HELEN:** Oh shut up. Your just a hoojamyjib

**DONALD:** A hoojamyjib? That's rich coming from you -

**HELEN:** Woof ! Woof woof woof!

**DONALD:** Grrrrr!

*Ken and Mo enter, watch*

**HELEN:** Miaow Miaow Miaow

**DONALD:** Quack quack quack quack!

**HELEN:** (Trumpets like an elephant) Ooooooooooooooooooooo!  
Ooooooooooooooooooooo!

*They notice Ken and Mo. Silence.*

**MO:** He changed his mind

**KEN** Six euro for a plate of paella?

**MO** For two.

**KEN** Daylight robbery.

*Blackout*

*Music under - 'I love to go a wandering along the mountain track...etc ...*

## SCENE 2

*Lights up. Daytime*

*A bench or somesuch in limbo. Donald and Ken enter, ideally through the audience with walking poles and backpacks. Donald takes a cloth out of his pocket, wipes the bench, puts the cloth away carefully. They sit. Ken is knackered, takes a swig of water, passes the flask to Donald who gets the cloth out again, wipes the rim before drinking.*

**KEN:** God it's hot. I've always hated mountains. They're so bloody inert. How much further?

**DONALD:** The book says five hours.

**KEN:** This is ridiculous. *(he points)*. Up the ridge, down the other side, up another, down another -

**DONALD:** Santamaria (*Spanish accent*) did it on her bare knees, in winter, without food or drink. Crawled all day, prayed all night, lost three toes to frostbite.

**KEN:** Is that what the relic is?

**DONALD:** They think it's her appendix. Which, interestingly, would have been significantly smaller than a Spanish woman's appendix today.

**KEN:** Fascinating. Do you know what I think? She went off her medication. Mad as hatter, most saints were, you need two negative psychiatric reports before they'll even beatify you. So they shut her up in a convent with a couple of burly holy sisters to make sure she took her herbal remedies three times a day. Then one day she decides she doesn't need them anymore, chucks the roots and berries down the long drop, and back come the voices. They tell her that Mother Significa is the devil in person, so *(very Spanish)* Santamaria goes at her with a crozier, at which point the holy sisters grab her by the wimple, throw her into the fish pond and hold her under until she confesses which she refuses to do so she drowns. The Bishop says-leave this with me. And the next thing you know three young shepherdesses - it's always shepherdesses, have you noticed? Never three plumbers or three estate agents or three shinty players — say they they've seen the blessed Santamaria floating in mid air over Mount whatever it's called and hundreds of pilgrims and penitents rush up the mountain and get miraculously cured of acne and ear-ache and piles, and boomph! What do you know! This wretched lump of rock has got itself a tourist industry.

**DONALD:** The usual medieval cure for what we now call bi-polar disorder was belladonna root with beeswax and tincture of groutwort rubbed into the skull on a full moon.

**KEN:** Fascinating. They've also run tests on a relic said to be the small intestine of Saint Basil of Stroud (789-922 AD) , who was apparently schizophrenic, and found pellets of nettle and goats dung. I wonder if they've taken any samples from Santamaria's appendix.

**DONALD:** I'll look it up when I get back

**KEN:** I made that up.

~~**KEN:**~~ Do you think we should wait for them?

**DONALD:** I'm not sure. I know Helen was keen to have a chat with Mo on her own. Girl to girl..

**KEN:** I think we'd better wait. Mo had her sense of direction surgically removed at birth. It's a gender thing, apparently. .Women can't read maps, men can't talk to each other on the phone for two hours.

*Donald gets out an energy bar, offers one to Ken. They chew.*

**KEN:** How did you two meet?

**DONALD:** Completely random. We were seated together on a flight.- British Caledonian BAC One Eleven, Glasgow- Gatwick. Her life was in a mess, she needed someone to talk to. And here we are, 25 years later-

**KEN:** So what does Mrs Rat do for a living?

**DONALD:** Mouse. She's a relationship counsellor.. Relationships, parenting, emotional hygiene.

**KEN:** Fascinating. And how about you?

**DONALD:** I'm a risk assessor.

**KEN:** Do you risk assess marriages?

**DONALD:** That's an interesting idea. Very interesting. Emotional health and safety,

**KEN:** Jesus, what's that?

**DONALD:** What's what?

**KEN:** There. In the grass .

**DONALD:** Where?

**KEN:** Over there! Bloody hell.

**DONALD:** I can't see anything. What is it?

**KEN:** Some kind of snake.

*Donald is terrified,*

**DONALD:** A snake? What did it look like ?

**KEN:** Umm - sort of tubular

*KEN demonstrates its length*

**DONALD:** Oh my God.

**KEN:** There are loads of them up here apparently. Iberian Rock Viper, Pyrenean Cobra, Vermicelli Whip snake. Have you ever been bitten?

**DONALD:** No.

**KEN:** Not always fatal, but it can be. Mo had a friend whose mother trod on an adder in Corsica, had her leg amputated.

*Donald is increasingly agitated. Helen and Mo enter*

Oh, Hi.

**HELEN:** Is something wrong?

**DONALD:** We saw a snake.

*Helen gives Donald a hug.*

**HELEN:** Oh Tiger. Are you OK?

*(To Mo and Ken)* Snakes freak him.

*Mo sits, takes off a sandal, examines her heel*

**KEN:** Penis envy.*(Mockingly)* Are you OK, my darling

**MO:** I thought you'd never ask. You very thoughtfully put the plasters in your own pack. How much further is it?

**HELEN:** To the refuge? What do you reckon, Tiger?

**DONALD:** Four hours or so.

**HELEN:** We'd better keep going,.

*Donald Helen and Ken gather their kit.*

**MO:** Ahem.

**KEN:** Sorry?

**MO:** Umm- you know a peculiar thing? If a group of people set out together on a walk..and some of them are a bit slower..and after a

while the faster ones decide they'd better stop and wait... So they sit down, and have a good rest until the slow ones catch up...and then the moment the slow ones crawl in - - the fast ones set off again. I know. Amazing, isn't it.

*(To Helen and Donald) We'll catch you up*

*Helen and Donald exit. Ken sits.*

**KEN:** Let me have look at it.

**MO:** Don't bother, there's nothing wrong with it. I just needed an excuse to get rid of that cow.

**KEN:** I thought you were getting on.

**MO:** That wasn't getting on. She was interrogating me.

**KEN:** She's a counsellor. She does it for a living. You took the duty free, by the way.

*He starts rummaging in her backpack, gets out a flask, sniffs, drinks, passes it to her*

**MO:** She wanted to know about my childhood.

**KEN:** Of course she did.

**MO:** I told her my mother was a legendary slut, Nickerless Nellie frae Nairn. She was never entirely sure who my father was- it was one of those nights, a free bar and very poor lighting. She thinks he may have been called Frankie. Or Hamish. Or Angus. She wanted to know what went wrong between us.

**KEN:** What did you say?

**MO:** I told her you were gay. You're a dentist, by the way.

**DONALD:** A gay dentist.

**MO:** You spend your days hurting people who can't talk back at you.

**KEN:** Thanks. And what do you do, just so I know.?

**MO:** I work for the government

**KEN:** Doing what?

**MO:** I'm not allowed to say. It's sensitive.

**KEN:** Sensitive.

**MO:** Very.

**KEN:** How's that for type casting.

**MO:** How was yours?

**KEN:** Fascinating. A disused mine of information

**MO:** What did you talk about?

**KEN:** Oh, the usual. Football. Existentialism. Who's got the biggest willie . I told him about your Gloxemia.

**MO:** What's Gloxemia?

**KEN:** A recently diagnosed progressive disorder. Large chunks of your cortex keep falling off, leading to erratic behaviour and extreme difficulty in listening to what other people are saying. The doctors say it's incurable, barring some kind of miracle. I suggested Lourdes but you were a bit snobbish about the idea, it didn't sound like your kind of place , you'd prefer a boutique camino. So here we are.

**MO:** You're so pathetic.

*They look away from each other, gaze into the distance. A long pause. Mo puts her boots on, gathers up her pack , starts to leave. Then Kens starts up*

**KEN:** Ooooooooooooooooooooo

**MO:** No. Just fucking no!

*She exits after him*

*Blackout ; music - 'Keep right on to the end of the road' .*

### **SCENE 3**

*Night. A different refuge. Helen is seated thumbing through a guide book while Donald cuts her hair.*

**HELEN:** There's something called a Mediterranean scorpion . Often found lurking inside boots and shoes..

**DONALD:** Could you lift your head a little?

**HELEN:** ...Megarian Banded Centipede, the hairs are poisonous ...

*He finishes snipping, holds up a travel mirror for her to inspect*

**DONALD:** How's that?

**HELEN:** Perfect. A wolf spider...

*Donald does a wolf spider impression with noises, advances on Helen*

**DONALD:** Woof woof etc..

**HELEN:** And a tiger mosquito. Eeeeeeeeeee! Eeeee weeee eee!

*Helen turns on him, does a tiger mosquito impression*

**DONALD:** Woof woof

**HELEN:** Eeeee ..

*They do a kind of spider-mosquito battle dance; Helen bares her teeth; Donald cowers. The battle turns into a kind of embrace*

**DONALD:** Don't bite me ! Don't bite me

**HELEN:** Eeeeeeee

**DONALD:** Please don't bite me ! Please! Bite me! Bite me!

*They hear noises off. Helen and Donald freeze, Mo enters. She's agitated*

**MO:** Hi

**DONALD:** Ah. Hi

**HELEN:** Is everything OK?

**MO:** (*Emphatically*) I'm fine.

*Long silence*

A bit knackered, that's all

*Donald gives her an energy bar,*

Thanks

**HELEN:** You don't have to be OK you know. It's OK not to be OK

**MO:** But I am.

**HELEN:** That's OK too.

**MO:** (*suddenly angry*) Oh fuck off.

**HELEN:** Oh. OK

**MO:** Just fuck off. Stop saying 'OK' to everything.

**HELEN:** OK

**MO:** STOP IT!

*Donald winces*

**DONALD:** Maybe we should all just calm down for a moment

**MO:** Calm down?? Calm down?? What's there to calm down about?

**DONALD:** I'm sorry.

**MO:** No you're not. You're not sorry. You're scared. AAARGH!

*Mo makes a devil face at him, gets to her feet, claws at the air*

AAARGH! AAAARGH!

*Donald and Helen cower. Mo sits down again, they relax, then MO barks again*

AAAAAGH!

*Mo calms down, resumes chewing her energy bar.. After a while she starts to sob quietly.*

Just leave me alone for a moment will you?

*She snuffles for a bit*

Bastard.

**HELEN:** Would it help to talk about it?

**MO:** No.

**HELEN:** Can I suggest something?

**MO:** No.

**HELEN:** If you don't feel able to talk about it out loud, try closing your eyes, counting to ten and talking to yourself about it.

*Helen moves over, sits beside her strokes her hand. Mo leans in to her shoulder.*

**HELEN:** So what happened?

**MO:** He's full of shit

**HELEN:** OK...what else?

**MO:** *(Snuffles, wipes her eyes etc, spits out the insults like an actress)* He's such a prick . Cheapskate. Coward ... cry-baby. Hypocrite..

*More snuffles. Donald has the tissues, Helen gestures him to stay away.*

**HELEN:** Well done. Emotional honesty takes a lot of courage but it's transformative, like stripping naked in the street and saying - 'This. Is. Me! Get used to it!'

*Mo looks Helen up and down, imagining Helen naked, shudders, looks away*

**MO:** I wasn't being brave, I was angry. He just sat there and looked at the mountains and whistled 'Congratulations'. We used to sing it all the time when we were first married.

**HELEN:** 'Congratulations'. And celebrations..

*More sobs. Helen gestures to Donald who hands her a tissue; Helen hands it to Mo.*

**MO:** He said I was like my mother. Kept saying it.

**HELEN:** We're all like are mothers. We can't help it.

**DONALD:** I'm not.

**HELEN:** Shh, Tiger. Mo, I want you to imagine for a moment that you're looking at yourself in a mirror and tell me -

**MO:** Spare me the bullshit! You lot just spout this stuff as if you're talking about recipes or how to get the stains out jumpers. (*Mockingly*) 'Maybe you should stop trying to change him and try not adding in the corriander for a few weeks and see how it feels'. 'Food stains aren't something you have to be ashamed of, we all have them..'

*Mo kicks the furniture a bit, finally quietens herself down.*

I'm very sorry

**HELEN:** Don't be, This is good, this is very good.

*Helen gives her a hug ; they neither of them notice that behind them Donald has started twitching. jiggling his hands nervously, begins to shake his head in a disturbing way.*

**DONALD:** (*Shouts, fortissimo*) LEAVE MY MOTHER OUT IF THIS!

**MO:** Are you all right?

**DONALD:** LEAVE MAM OUT OF IT! LEAVE HER OUT OF IT!

**HELEN:** Deep breaths, Tiger. Deep breaths.

**DONALD:** I'm not, I'm not like her, I'm not, I'm really not ,

**HELEN:** Shhh now. I know you're not.

*He's beginning to hyperventilate. Helen goes over to him, tries to hold him, he pushes her away.*

**DONALD:** He shouldn't have hit her. *(To MO)* Please don't be angry. Please. No anger. Please

**MO:** I'm not angry

**DONALD:** Yes you are.

**HELEN:** She is, but she's not angry with you , Tiger. No-one's angry with you  
*Helen steers him to the bed; he lies down.*

Is it the voices?

*He nods*

What are they saying?

*He whispers something*

Mmmmm

*Whispers more*

That's not true. Tiger. That's not true. They're from Scotland.

*He gets very agitated She takes Mo and Ken aside.*

His mother killed his father.

**MO:** What?? Are you serious?

**HELEN:** They were drunk. His da kept slapping his mam around the face. Donald handed her a knife, one of those electric carving knives, he plugged it in and turned it on and gave it to her and she stuck it in his dad's chest then let go, and it just sort of kept sawing away by itself and she just stood there laughing . Eventually Donald turned the knife off at the switch and poured his mam another vodka and one for himself.

**MO:** God almighty. How old was he?

**DONALD:** Seven.

**MO:** Seven?

**DONALD:** And a half.

**HELEN:** She got twenty years. She's dead now

*We hear the sound of singing off stage*

- what's that?

**MO:** Oh shit.

**KEN:** *(Singing, off; more 'Congratulations')* Who could believe that I could be happy and contented / I used to think that happiness hadn't been invented!

*KEN enters., swaying, drink taken. Stops dead.*

I'm sorry. I'm so so so sorry. I didn't mean it. I'm not sure what it was I said but I didn't mean it. You're beautiful . No, not you, her. You too, all of you

*He drops to his knees in front of Mo*

I'm so so so so sorry, my darling..

**MO:** No you're not.

**KEN:** Yes I am. I love you

**MO:** No you don't.

**KEN:** Don't I?

**MO:** No.

**KEN:** You're right. I don't

**BLACKOUT**

## SCENE 4

*(Throughout the following two scenes they are all pestered by flying insects, try to catch them, slap themselves, wave them away, scratch themselves)*

*Lights up on limbo (outside) . Donald and Ken enter with backpacks, take them off. Donald starts doing tai chi (or other exercise..) routine. Ken is seated.. Buzz of insects Both of them keep swatting and waving them away , scratching etc*

**DONALD:** *(rhythmically)* Umph Umph Aaaaargh Umph Umph Aaaaargh Chi Chi Chi Chi aaagh etc

*He stretches, sits down, very carefully checks his watch*

**KEN:** I'm sorry about last night.

**DONALD:** 36.5 degrees,

**KEN:** I was pissed.

**DONALD:** Humidity 80 %. Possibility of thunder storms

**KEN:** Blootered..

*Donald puts his hand on Ken's shoulder, gives it a squeeze*

**DONALD::** You were brilliant

**KEN:** I'm sorry?

**DONALD:** Last night. You were brilliant

*Donald's hand lingers slightly longer than necessary. Ken twitches nervously*

**KEN:** I thought that's what you said.

**DONALD:** Awesome. Women are meant to be the emotional ones but it's not true. Men are far more emotional, but they have better manners.

*Donald sits down uncomfortably close to Ken, peels back the wrapper on an energy bar suggestively , offer sit to Ken, who stands up; Donald takes a bite*

**KEN:** No thanks .You know, it would be a lot simpler and cheaper to stay home, buy a couple of exercise bikes

**DONALD:** That's beside the point. The point is the journey.

**KEN:** And what's at the end of it?

**DONALD:** A better understanding of the inner you With the bonus of making new friends,=.

*He gives Ken a friendly hug. Ken moves away,*

**KEN:** The truth is Mr Tiger: I don't want to be understood. I'm sick of being understood .

*Donald looks him the eye*

**DONALD:** I'll try not to understand you, Ken, I really will. I can't promise, but I'll try.

*He gives him a wink and a punch on the shoulder*

**KEN:** Don't move.

*Ken puts his hand on Donald's neck and very delicately removes something, takes his hand away.. Helen and Mo enter*

**HELEN:** What's going on? Are you OK, Tiger?

*Donald puts his hand to his neck*

What did he do to you?

*A raven caws; flash of lightening.*

**KEN:** It was a mosquito.

**DONALD:** You have very soft hands, Ken. But then you're a dentist. All the better to...

*Ken indicates Helen's jaw*

**KEN:** How's the tooth?

**HELEN:** Bloody agony

*She offers Ken her open mouth*

**KEN:** Let's have a look. Sit down.

*Ken probes Helen winces, gasps etc; he keeps probing; she shouts in pain, he keeps going*

It needs to come out. No question. There's only one problem.

**HELEN:** Aaaagh!

**MO:** He's not a dentist,

**HELEN:** What?

**MO:** He's not a dentist,

**HELEN:** I don't understand. Are you a dentist, or aren't you?

**KEN:** I'm not.

**HELEN:** You said he was.

**MO:** I was lying.

**HELEN:** What? Why?

**MO:** No particular reason. I suppose 'dentist' sounds marginally more interesting than 'supply teacher' .

*Donald is getting agitated. Distant thunder, the odd lightning flash wind . Helen has her fingers in her mouth, worries at her tooth*

**DONALD:** Please, please, don't be angry

**HELEN:** Do you lie often? Just for the hell of it ? It's OK, Tiger, we're not fighting.

**KEN** Yea.. All the time. We both do.

**HELEN:** No wonder your marriage is the way it is.

**KEN:** It would be in an even worse state if we didn't . We tell each other loads of little lies. Your entire marriage is a lie..

**HELEN:** What are you talking about?

**KEN:** *(Indicates Donald)* You and your dog substitute . Twenty five years and I'm pretty sure you've never told the truth to each other once. About anything. I'll pretend to love you if you'll pretend to love me. Be careful not to step on the cracks...

**(LINE CUT OUT)**

**HELEN:** What the hell are you talking about?

**DONALD:** I heard him, he called me - he says I'm your - what was it?

**KEN:** Dog substitute.

**HELEN:** You're just jealous

**MO:** Of you two???

**DONALD:** Am I?

**HELEN:** Are you what?

**DONALD:** Your lap dog?

**KEN:** *(Howls like a wolf)* Oooowww

*SFX Thunder, lightning, wind, Lights flicker on and off. Darkness*

**DONALD:** Who's there? Who's there?

**HELEN:** No-one's there, Tiger

*More thunder etc*

**DONALD:** Yes, Holy Mother, yes Holy Mother, I hear you

*Lights come up. Donald is kneeling.*

Yes, yes,, Holy Mother, yes, I understand. Halo? Halo? Can you speak up?

*He crosses himself*

She's gone.

**HELEN:** What did she say?

**DONALD:** It's a secret. All will be relieved within twelve working days.

**Storm effects, lightning, Darkness etc**

**Blackout**

## SCENE 4 A

### Exterior after the storm

**MO:** As a matter of idle curiosity, does anyone have any idea where we are?

*Donald is studying the map.*

**HELEN:** (*Irritably*) Come on, Tiger, You got us here. Get us out.

*Helen takes the map away from Donald.*

**DONALD:** Other way up.

*She turns it round*

**HELEN:** So where are we?

**DONALD:** We don't know.

**HELEN:** What are you going to do about it?

**KEN:** Sit, Tiger!

**DONALD:** Why me? Why does it have to be me? It's not my job to fix your life for you

**HELEN:** Yes it is, no it isn't, yes it is. It's your job to fix my life without either of us knowing you're doing it.. That's how a marriage works, isn't it?

**DONALD:** It can be. It can also be why it doesn't.

**HELEN:** What do you mean by that?

**KEN:** Oooo. What do you make of that, Mrs Seasnake?

**HELEN:** Please, tell me Donald - what do you mean exactly?

**DONALD:** Nothing.

**HELEN:** No, go on, I'd like to know.

**DONALD:** Maybe it's true. I'm always trying to please you.

**KEN:** Attaboy rover.

**HELEN:** What is this, a Declaration of Independence?

**DONALD:** I just don't think it's very healthy.

**KEN:** Miaow.

**MO:** Shut up, Ken. Just shut up. In fact why doesn't everyone shut up .

*Silence. Rumbling storm*

**KEN:** So what's the plan?

**DONALD:** We don't really have one.

**HELEN:** I do.

*She exits. Storm still rumbling on*

*SFX Animal roar. Helen re-enters , terrified*

**DONALD:** What the hell?

**HELEN:** I think it's a bear.

*More crashing and roars*

**MO:** Are you serious? Oh my God.

**HELEN:** Shhh. Don't move.

*More bear sounds.*

**KEN:** Shouldn't we -

**MO:** Stay very still. Pretend you're David Attenborough

**HELEN:** Keep your voice down

**DONALD** (Stage whisper) *Ursus arctos pyrenaicus*, Omnivors.

**MO:** Shhhhhhh.

*They stand very rigid . More noises off. They stand like this for some time in a line. Insect noises; they try not to react, swat etc. Mo is about to sneeze, tries not to , does. Loud crashing off. They stand there.*

**DONALD:** The males can grow to two metres

**KEN:** Shhhhhhh.

**DONALD:** One of them ate the arm off a German birdwatcher last year.

**HELEN:** SHHHHH.

*More crashing. They stand rigid. Very very slow lighting fade. Owl noises. Fade to black.*

*Music - "Roaming in the gloaming", or 'The Road To God Knows Where'.)*

## SCENE 5

*Interior refuge, morning. Mo Donald and Helen sit in silence, boots off at their feet, packs ready for the day; the body language is subdued. Helen sneezes.. They're itching.. Donald sneezes. Ken enters with tin mugs, hands them round.. Mo sneezes. They examine the contents suspiciously. Mo sniffs.*

**MO:** What's in it?

**KEN:** Marmot, I think, with some kind of salt fish.

**MO:** Ugh

**DONALD:** This is inedible

*They push their mugs away. Silence.*

**HELEN:** Why don't you start us off Mo

**MO:** OK. My name is Maureen I'm 42 years old, I come from Paisley, I was never sexually abused in my childhood, I enjoy watching soap operas (*glances at Ken*), , and I'm an asshole.

**KEN:** My name is Kenneth, I come from Largs, I'm 42 and I'm an asshole.

*Silence. Ken sneezes.*

**HELEN:** Donald?

**DONALD:** After you.

**HELEN:** No, Tiger, you go first.

**DONALD:** Stop telling me what to do

**HELEN:** Sorry.

**DONALD:** Thank you. OK. My name is Donald, I'm 53 years old, I come from Rutherglen, I've been in therapy since I was eight, and I'm an asshole.

**HELEN:** No you're not, Tiger.

**DONALD:** Yes I am. I think we all are.

**HELEN:** Oh Tiger. I'm sorry about yesterday. We were all very tired.

*(Deep breath etc)* My name is Helen, I come from Cathcart, I'm 48 -

*Donald coughs*

-51 and I'm here to celebrate twenty five years of what I've always thought of as a very rich (*snuffle*) and (*snuffle*) happy marriage to --

Him-. And . And. I'm. I'm. I'm. An arsehole.

*Silence. All four sneeze in turn*

**DONALD:** What do we do now?

*No-one knows. They look at each other.*

**HELEN:** Apologise, I think.

**KEN:** What for?

**HELEN:** Being arseholes

**DONALD** OK. I'm sorry.

**HELEN:** I'm sorry.

*Mo is about to speak, opens her mouth, accidentally catches Ken's eye, he looks away innocently, both trying not to laugh . She just about manages a straight face*

**MO:** I'm sorry.

**KEN:** This is cuckoo.

**HELEN:** It may feel that way, but I don't think it is. If we're all at fault, then we can start to move forward.

**KEN:** OK. I'm - (*he struggles*)

**DONALD:** Cuckoo! Cuckoo!

*Ken can't hold it in, tries to smother a laugh. Mo and Donald do the same.*

**HELEN:** Why is this funny?

*Ken Mo and Donald corpse*

Please. Tell me. What's so funny

*They just keep laughing*

Donald. Stop. This isn't a joke . Explain

**DONALD:** (*with difficulty*) I'm I'm...I'm (*trying not to laugh*) sorry. I'm a ..kangaroo

*He does a kangaroo jump. The three of them really lose it*

**HELEN:** Stop it ! Stop it ! Donald ! Stop !

**DONALD:** (*Mockingly*) Sit, Donald ! Stay, Donald ! Heel Donald ! Kennel !

**HELEN:** It's the voices again, isn't it

**DONALD:** No.. I'm sick of it.

*Helen just stares at him then slowly her face crumbles*

*Helen sobs for a while. Mo gestures to Ken, they exit quietly. More silence*

**HELEN:** (quietly) Sick of what?

**DONALD:** This whole ridiculous charade. Mrs Mouse, Mr Tiger, woof woof, eeeek eeeek, grrrr,! Miaow! It's pathetic. We only do it because we're scared.

**HELEN:** Scared of what?

**DONALD:** Real life. Those two are right, this isn't a marriage, it's simply a habit.

*Helen continues to sob quietly*

**HELEN:** I thought you loved me.

**DONALD:** I needed you. Or that's what you told me. If I was on my own the outside world would eat me alive. And I was terrified you'd leave me.

**HELEN:** Your mother didn't kill him, you did. She was drunk, she just assumed she'd done it. And you didn't contradict her. That's what you're scared of. You know what you're capable of and you're scared you might do it again.

(Quietly) It's so sad, Tiger, it's so sad.

*They sit in silence. Both weary, in shock.*

All these years. And now this.

*Long pause*

What are we going to do?

**DONALD:** I suppose we have to have the courage to face reality. I think we should-

*Donald freezes, puts his hand over his mouth, starts to retch*

**HELEN:** What's wrong?

**DONALD:** I think it must be the marmot.

*He starts retching, exits at speed. Sounds of vomiting, or the other , off*

**HELEN:** Are you OK?

*More vomiting and/or bowel sounds off. Ken and Mo enter.*

**HELEN:** Oh . Hi. He thinks it was the marmot. He's a terrible drama queen when it comes to his -

*Helen too starts to retch,*

- health

*She exits. Ken gets out the hip flask, drinks*

**KEN:** We shouldn't have laughed like that.

**MO:** Oh come on now. She's a monster.

**KEN:** No she isn't. She's just run out of road. She thinks no-one likes her because they think she's psychoanalysing them all the time . Cheers

*He, passes the flask to Mo. She drinks*

You remember the first time we slept together?

**MO:** Vaguely. Cheers.

**KEN:** I thought you were someone else.

*Mo gives a kind of snort-cum-chuckle, takes the flask, drinks*

**MO:** Me too. I thought you were Tommy McCall

**KEN:** Tommy McCall?? Wee Tommy McCall ????? You thought I was Half-arse McCall?? Jesus.

**MO:** And who did you think I was?

*Pause. She passes him back the flask; he's about to drink but pauses He takes a swig*

**KEN:** Bronwyn

**MO:** No ! I don't believe it. The Welsh piglet?

*She starts to laugh*

**KEN:** Wee Tommy McCall. Didn't he used to wear platforms?

**MO** That's so tragic. You still keep in touch with her, don't you.

**KEN:** (*A bit thrown*) Bronwyn? Not really.

**MO:** What does 'not really' mean?

**KEN:** It means 'not really'. She's married.

**MO:** So are you. God my shoulder hurts.

**KEN:** Will I give it a rub?

*He begins to massage her*

**MO:** So where do you run into her 'occasionally'.

**KEN:** Graveyards, , late night buses, public conveniences.

*Without thinking she bares her shoulders. He's not thinking either, automatically slides aside her straps, starts rubbing it in, catches himself on, but keeps massaging*

How about Peru.

*Silence*

**MO:** Peru? What about it?

**KEN:** Take a year out, sell the flat, dump our possessions , just head off.

**MO:** We'll get mugged, we'll get sick, we'll be kidnapped and eaten by sharks and trampled to death in a riot but hey ! What else is life for!

**KEN** How about it

*His hands keep wandering. He whistles 'Congratulations'.*

*She pushes him away violently.*

**MO:** Don't. Just don't. OK ?

**KEN:** You're right.

**MO:** Of course I'm right. If we let ourselves go down that route we'll end up in precisely the same place as before.

*She gets up*

Just leave me alone, OK? Now and for ever, amen.

**KEN:** Alle-fucking- lullah

**MO:** You're such a pathetic little shit. Broglewit? must be really desperate.

*Ken begins to retch*

Are you OK?

*Ken exits.. Mo gets out her diary , starts writing; scratches something out , writes again, scratches out again. Donald enters ,humming Congratulations. He sits, takes his boot off, inspects a blister. Both of them keep swatting away insects*

**DONALD** Do you know, at tribal weddings in parts of Sarawak the bride and groom's parents are each given a powerful herbal laxative an hour before the marriage is consummated to symbolise the expulsion of their son and daughter from the family home. It's going to be a tough day...From here to the shrine...about ten hours.. But after it's all done. We can all go home and get on with whatever comes next.

**MO:** In your case - ?

**DONALD:** Own two feet. *(he points at them..)* Thanks to you.

**MO:** What will you do?

**DONALD:** Boogie. Chase women. Or men, maybe. How about you two? Will you give it another try?

**MO:** With that bastard? Mr No-to-everything, do -you -realise-what -that -costs, what's-wrong-with-the-curtains-we've-got?

*Mo goes back to her diary. Ken and Helen enter,*

**HELEN:** Can I ask what you're writing?

**MO:** Sure. *..(Reads)* Day 4. Still no wi-fi. Kenneth is beginning to smell so badly that we try and stay upwind of him whenever possible. Food is running very short. Last night I dreamed that I was at the top of a very tall cliff standing next to Donald, naked with a rose in his teeth.. I pushed him off the cliff.. then suddenly I'm not on the cliff any more, I'm writing my diary and a woman interrupts and asks me what I'm writing, so I have to stop writing..

**HELEN:** Sorry I spoke

*Donald picks up his boot, looks inside, recoils, drops it*

**DONALD:** Oh my God

**HELEN:** What is it?

**DONALD:** There's something in there.

**MO:** It's only a beetle. Probably.

**HELEN:** Oh my God. What if it's -

**DONALD:** - scorpion? Could be, I suppose

*They all look at the boot., no-one makes a move. Helen sneezes. Donald pokes the boot with his walking pole*

**HELEN:** Don't do that

*He picks the boot up with his walking pole, waves it towards Helen*

Please don't do that.

*He keeps going, makes threatening noises, pulls a face, advances towards her*

**DONALD:** The first time you kill it's difficult. After that...ha ha ha

**HELEN:** Stop!

*Donald puts the boot down, pokes the inside with his stick, takes a look, pokes it more then turns it upside down; something falls out. He stamps on it. Ken and Mo go over, have a look.*

I hate you. I really really hate you

*Machine gun shots stage right. They turn to face the sound, slowly put their hands up*

**KEN:** **Oh shit. We're in serious trouble, guys**

*Blackout .*

## SCENE 6

*Music ' Altso Spracht Zarathustra '*

*Lights up to reveal the shrine, a small box or barrel on a small plinth with what looks like a prune in a coffee jar on it and a collection tin. Raven calls. The four enter, shivering and completely knackered. Ken and Mo are supporting Helen, who has her arm in a sling.. Donald has a head bandage, is limping very badly; they have no luggage*

**KEN:** Is this it?

**MO:** I guess.

**DONALD:** Shouldn't we be feeling something?

*No-one responds*

**KEN:** What's the matter with you lot? Cheer up. No-one's dead.

**DONALD:** We're cold. That's what's wrong with us. We're cold, we're wet, we're exhausted, we've got diarrhoea , we've been mugged, all we have is the clothes were wearing, none of know why on earth we came here and what we thought we'd achieve.

**KEN:** Didums, Mr Pusspuss. Didums.

**MO:** Ken -

**DONALD:** How dare you.

**MO:** Oh shut up .

**DONALD:** Are you talking to me?

**MO:** I'm talking to all of you. . Zip it.

**KEN:** Me too?

**MO:** You too, Kenneth.

**DONALD:** *(To Helen)* What does he mean, zip it?

**HELEN:** Leave them alone, Donald. They're not worth bothering with

**DONALD:** *(Getting agitated)* He called me puss-puss

**MO:** *(To Ken)* Oh for God's sake - stop!

**KEN:** Attaboy Mr Puss!

**MO:** STOP !

**KEN:** I'm sorry. Sorry sorry sorry

**MO:** I'm sorry too.

*No-one speaks. Ravens caw*

*No-one says anything. Helen and Donald stand apart, avoid eye contact. Mo and Ken face each other, hands on each others shoulders.*

**MO:** Samoa.

**KEN:** Why Samoa?

**MO:** Because Peru was your idea.

**KEN:** Peru's a lot easier to get to. And cheaper.

**MO:** Samoa.

**KEN:** Umm. Ok. Samoa

**MO:** Thank you,

*Donald looks at his feet. Helen wipes her eyes*

**DONALD:** I'll call round for my stuff. You can keep the furniture..

**HELEN:** What about your parrot?

**DONALD:** I'd like you to have it.

**HELEN:** No, you have it.. Every time it squawked I'd think of you

**DONALD:** Onwards and downwards, so to speak

**HELEN:** Right. No regrets, that's what you're mean to say isn't it?

**DONALD:** No regrets. Or not many.

**HELEN:** You'll be fine, Tiger.

**DONALD:** So will you.

*Brave smiles etc .. A raven caws, very loud and persistently*

*Donald suddenly freezes , looks at the sky, drops to his knees*

**DONALD:** Look ! Up there !

*He points. They look up at the sky.*

**MO:** What are we meant to be seeing?

**DONALD:** Over there. There's something coming out of the clouds

**HELEN:** No there isn't, Donald. You think there is, but there isn't

**DONALD:** Yes there is. It's her! Can't you see her?

*Donald sinks to his knees Ken starts to snigger. Helen catches Mo's eye, she stops him,*

**MO:** Good heavens. Look, Ken. It's the nun.

*Ken catches on*

**KEN:** Well well well.

**DONALD:** Yes, yes, I'm here, Santamaria? *(Pause)* Speak up. *(Pause)* Say that more slowly

**HELEN:** What's she saying?

**DONALD** I don't know. It's in Spanish. Hold on. Que ducha..

*He gets out a dictionary*

**MO:** Shower?

**DONALD:** What a shower. De - that's Of, presumably. What a shower Of - can you say that more slowly ?pendejos? pendejos, pendejos-

**KEN:** Arseholes, I presume

**DONALD:** Shhh. Yes, Santamaria, I'm listening... sorry, no comprehendo – hablas ingles? *(Listens)* Thanks, That's better. I'll ask them . . *(To group)* How long since your last confessions? Ages apparently. Would they like to ..*(to the others)* She's offering to take confessions.

**MO:** What does it involve?

**DONALD** We get things off our chests, she absolves us, we live relatively happily ever after*(They shrug; Mo and Ken exchange smirks . Donald Listens)* How much. *(Listens)* Each, or for the four of us? *(Listens)* I'll check. *(To the others)* Five euros a head.

**HELEN:** Offer her three.

**DONALD:** How about three? Three fifty? Four?

*They search their pockets, count out the cash. Donald holds the collection box, replaces it. They wait*

**KEN:** What happens now?

**DONALD:** We confess. The truth, the whole truth and almost nothing but the truth

**MO:** And if we, you know, fudge a bit?

**DONALD:** You'll be in excruciating pain and emotional torment for all eternity.

**KEN:** This is a joke, isn't it..

**DONALD:** I don't know. It might be..

**KEN:** You're the risk assessor

**DONALD:** Tough call. Most policies don't cover Acts of God.

**KEN:** OK. Why not.

*Donald hands him the relic, makes a speaking gesture with his hand, nods*

*Ravens caw etc Ken clears his throat.*

Forgive me missus for I have sinned in loads of ways but that's all in the past now and from here on in I'll be good. Cross my heart and hope to die in due course.

**DONALD:** (*Listens*) She wants you to be a bit more specific

**KEN:** About what?

**MO:** Bogwit's love child?

**KEN:** How did you know about that?

**MO:** I just guessed. All that money must have been going somewhere. There's no point in doing this unless we're being honest

**KEN:** Ok, clever clogs. your turn

**MO:** Forgive me Santamaria for I have sinned in loads of ways but that's all in the past etc etc. Amen

**KEN:** All in the past? Ah you listening up there sainty? Grab a load of this.

*He gets out a small notebook ( or piece of paper ) and reads*

'Dear Diary. I wrote to Adam this morning and told him it wouldn't be long now, I'll be back from Spain next week, I promise I'll tell Ken but I'll wait until the last day and then my darling we won't need to pretend any more, we can be together night and day...blah blah'

**HELEN:** Which diary was that?

**KEN:** She has three. The one we're meant to read, the one we're meant to read thinking it's not the one we're meant to read, and the one where she's really talking to herself.

**MO:** You shite.

**KEN:** The pleasure's all mine. Who's next?

*Helen gets on her knees*

**HELEN:** Forgive me, Holy Mother. I've screwed up, I've made a terrible dogs dinner of things. I've never given him enough space, I've kept telling him he's hopelessly damaged, that he'd be locked up in the loony bin if it wasn't for me. I've made up a load of pseudo-psychiatric rubbish to keep him dependent. I've been incredibly selfish. The reason I've been selfish is because I've loved him ever since I sat down next to him on that Hawker Siddeley Trident -

**DONALD** *(Interrupts)* BAC One eleven

**HELEN:** - BAC One Eleven. And I've loved him ever since, and everything I've done has been out of fear of losing him, and I will still love him even if he decides, as he has every right to, to leave now, though it would break my heart in twain. Amen.

*She wipes away the tears. Donald kneels beside her, looks up at the sky*

**DONALD:** Me too, **Santamaria**. All these years I've been living a lie. I didn't kill my da, nor did my ma. I made it all up. Da left before I was born, went to Australia. My ma stayed over in Maryhill. She's in an old folks home in Largs now.

*Stunned silence*

**HELEN:** What about the voices?

**DONALD:** I made them up too.

**KEN:** Well fuck me

**HELEN:** Oh Tiger

*Helen and Donald embrace, start to sing and dance*

**DONALD** If you were the only girl in the world

*Ken gets on one knee in front of Mo and takes her hand*

**KEN:** Do you, Maureen, solemnly swear to get the hell out of my life, from this day forth, and stay there?

**HELEN:** ..and you were the only boy,,

**MO:** I do. And do you Kenneth solemnly swear to get the hell out of my life, from this day forth, and stay there?

**KEN:** I do.

**DONALD:** Are you sure about this, Mouse

**HELEN:** I think so

*They're not entirely sure but they sing on*

**DONALD:** Nothing else would matter in the world today

**MO:** Hard feelings?

**KEN:** And how, and how

**HELEN:** We will be together in the same old way

**DONALD:** Same old way? No, absolutely not

**DONALD/HELEN:** *(In unison but not entirely convinced)* A garden of Eden just

**KEN AND MO :** *(In loud unison)* SHUT THE FUCK UP

*Both couples look each other in the eye. Who knows what they'll do next...*

*Blackout; music 'Congratulations'*

**ENDS**