

The 8-DAY HUSTLE

by
Gustavo Ott
Translation: Heather L. McKay

GUSTAVO OTT
11738 Batley Pl
Woodbridge, VA 22192
gustavott@yahoo.com

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to Heather

Cast

Vanessa: fourteen years old

Goosy: sixty years old

Scene

The play takes place in a luxurious suite in a five star hotel.

FIRST INNING

December 18.

Voice:

...Bottom of the ninth;
Bases loaded; Two outs;
Game tied at nine. Full count, three'n two
Alfonso, clean up hitter, faces star relief pitcher
Goosy Goose.
The crowd roars.
The pitcher presents.
He winds up hard...it's a **missile.**

Lights.

A luxury hotel suite.

The telephone rings.

**GOOSY, dripping, comes out of the
bathroom in a towel.**

GOOSY:

Goosy speaking.

(He listens for a moment)

You saw the ad in the newspaper? Hmmmmm...

Good, that's good. I'm staying at the Hilton.

You're here? In the lobby.

Fine, well, ah actually... how did you know where...?

(He listens again. His towel begins to fall and he holds it up)

Ok, give me a half hour to dress and I'll meet you in the bar.

Good-bye.

(He hangs up and dials a number.)

GOOSY:

Room 566, again. Yes. I want that call put through to Miami, right away.

**(He hangs up and goes straight over to a
briefcase. Opens it. On top is a webbed
holster. He takes out the pistol and looks
it over. Puts it down beside the case to
leaf through some papers)**

GOOSY:

Just when I was going to get out of this stinking country.

(The phone rings. He quickly puts back the gun)

GOOSY:

Miami. Yes, thank you... **(Warm)** Martin!

They say they've got something important. Hmmm. Hmmm. It might be what you're looking for. Hmmm. I know, I know. I won't get emotional. I'm not like that anymore...that was before. Yes, it's cool. Sure. Give nothing away. If the merchandise is good I'll offer them...you know, fifty, sixty thousand. Eighty tops. These people don't know anything about doing business.

Pushovers.

(Listens)

In three days everything will be set.

Monday I'll be in Miami.

The weather is hell -- and the people...

(The doorbell rings. Toward the door)

Who is it?

(To the telephone) Someone's at the door.

(To the door) Who is it?

Voice:

It's me...

GOOSY:

Jesus!

(Begins pulling on clothes haphazardly.

To the telephone) He's here.

Don't worry about that.

I won't get excited.

I'm here to cut a good deal for you and I will.

(The doorbell rings again)

I'll call. Bye.

(Hangs up) Just a second!

(He straightens his shirt. Going over to the door)

...I thought you were going to wait for me in the bar.

...I was talking to my wife in New York.

...I'll be right there.

(Opens the door. Vanessa enters)

VANESSA:

My name's Vanessa and I'm not allowed in the bar.

GOOSY:

But...

VANESSA:

(Looking around) Where's your Christmas tree?

GOOSY:

You've got the wrong room.

VANESSA:

The eighteenth of December and you don't even have a stocking.

GOOSY:

I'm leaving today. But you can go now.

VANESSA:

I just got here. **(Investigating the room)**
You don't have a stereo either. How do you listen
to music?

GOOSY:

I don't listen to music.

VANESSA:

Are you deaf? SHOULD I SPEAK SLOW-LY LIKE THIS?

GOOSY:

I'm not deaf. You are in the wrong room.
Good-bye.

VANESSA:

Are you Goosy? **(Glancing at a menu)**
Goosy who put the ad in the paper?

GOOSY:

Yes, but I...this...you...

VANESSA:

Goosy who wants to buy vintage baseball cards?

GOOSY:

How old are you?

VANESSA:

I'm almost fifteen.

GOOSY:

Almost...?

VANESSA:

Almost.

GOOSY:

Good-bye.

VANESSA:

What do you mean good-bye?

GOOSY:

Don't make things difficult. Go on.

VANESSA:

I have a card you'll want to see.

(Looking at the room) If you stay is there going to be a Christmas tree?

GOOSY:

I'm not staying and neither are you. Good-bye.

VANESSA:

I came here to do business.

GOOSY:

I don't do business with kids.

VANESSA:

Fine! It's your loss.

GOOSY:

Dealing with minors is illegal.

Even in this crappy country. So good-bye.

And say hello to your dolls.

VANESSA:

I hate dolls. I haven't touched one since I was three years old.

GOOSY:

You're wasting my time. I want to get dressed.

VANESSA:

I'm fifteen and my brother sent me...

GOOSY:

Tell him to come himself.

VANESSA:

...with a card. John Comiskey. It's in mint condition, and dated 1903.

GOOSY:

Get...1903!!!

VANESSA:

(Leaving) But you don't want to do business with me so, like, I'll just be going.

GOOSY:

1903!!! Impossible. That's unbelievable... wait, wait, wait! I don't believe you... No ah...

(To himself) It's cool, keep cool...

(To Vanessa) Come here. Let's talk. Just talk.

VANESSA:

Is it interesting or isn't it?

GOOSY:

Aah, more or less.

VANESSA:

My brother knew it would be.

GOOSY:

Nah, Interesting, but a little. Very little. Because of the date, sure, but, it's nothing special.

Ah...ah...

Do you have it with you?

(Vanessa pulls out a card)

VANESSA:

(Before giving it to him) Why do you want to see it if it's not interesting?

GOOSY:

Curiosity.

VANESSA:

(Holding the card) It's probably worthless.

GOOSY:

I just collect them as a...it's a hobby.

VANESSA

(Still holding onto the card) Too bad it's not worth anything.

GOOSY:

Let me...all right?...take a look.

VANESSA:

(Giving it to him) It's yours, take it. **(Leaving)** See ya later...

GOOSY:

Comiskey 1903! Incredible. I don't believe it! Good-bye! Good-bye and thanks! **(Laughs)** ...But. But. But. Wait! Wait! Wait! It's only a copy!

VANESSA:

Xerox Color! **(Like a commercial, sings)** "Xerox, better than the original."

GOOSY:

Bu..Bu...But...(Losing control) Where is it?

VANESSA:

You said it wasn't interesting.

GOOSY:

Who has it?

VANESSA:

It's worthless.

GOOSY:

Where?

VANESSA:

You want the card?

GOOSY:

How much do you want for it?

VANESSA:

What's it worth?

GOOSY:

Not much, something... **(To himself)** Be cool...

VANESSA:

How much?

GOOSY:

Oh... **(He watches her closely. Sighs)**

What? A thousand. **(Looks her over)** A thousand dollars.

VANESSA:

A thousand dollars.

GOOSY:

I can give it to you right now.

VANESSA:

Right now? **(She walks over to the phone)**

Right now is when we begin.

GOOSY:

Who are you calling?

VANESSA:

Hello. May I speak with the restaurant?

Yes, I'd like two fudgie bombs brought to room 566. And I want to rent out the pool for the rest of the day. I'll need a bathing suit and a limousine waiting for me at seven PM.

(Looking around the room)

And go ahead and send up a Christmas tree, some presents, whatever you can think of. I want grapes, a turkey and all that. And I want a stereo, a CD player...

GOOSY:

What do you think you're doing?

VANESSA:

Are we going to do business?

GOOSY:

Yes, but...

VANESSA:

(Into the phone) And bring up an extra bed, please.

I'll have a guest staying with me from now on.

Charge it to room 566. **(To Goosy)** What'll you have? Want a snack?

GOOSY:

What's going on here?

VANESSA:

Cookies, ice cream and champagne with a couple of Bloody Marys. **(To Goosy)** I love mixed drinks. **(Into the phone)** And bring a red bicycle.

GOOSY:

A bicycle!!

VANESSA:

When I took a look at this room, the second thing I thought was it's big enough to be a park.

GOOSY:

And what was the first thing?

VANESSA:

That it's missing Christmas.

(Lights)

Voice:

And that wraps up the first inning. The recap:

two runs for the home team with five hits, one man stranded, two errors,
and one caught stealing.

The scoreboard shows:

Yankees 0, Cardinals 2...

SECOND INNING

December 20.

(Stage dark; one desk lamp to the side. Goosy's hands, lit, holding a small microphone. He is speaking into a tape recorder)

GOOSY:

...That's how I met her and, bam, she spilled everything on the same night. If you met her you'd hate her on sight. She's little, and so nasal. Down here, this way they talk gets on my nerves. What can I tell you about her, just that she's obnoxious. She won't tell me who she lives with, or where.

But soon I'm sure I'll meet whoever's behind all this, the person to deal with.

That's about all. I hope this letter reaches you on time. And that you have a good season with your team.

I am enclosing a photo of myself, as always.

I hope that when this business is over we can see each other and I can use the money to help you get out of that place.

I'll write again tomorrow.

I miss you.

(Lights up. The hotel suite. Now with a stereo and a trundle bed. A miniature white Christmas tree, covered in red lights. Vanessa, on her bicycle, wearing a Lara Cardinal's cap. Goosy, wearing a Yankees' cap. A loud and heavily rhythmic top forty song is coming from the stereo.)

GOOSY:

(Reading) "...the parties agree, as outlined in this document, to comply with the following terms..." Etcetera, etcetera...

VANESSA:

I don't like etceteras.

GOOSY:

It just says...

VANESSA:

I know what those things say. They always say plenty. What else did you put in there?

GOOSY:

I refuse to read any more while you go on blasting that music. You've been listening to the same thing for two days!

VANESSA:

It's popular. And anyways, it's American.

GOOSY:

So, you don't even have any idea what they're saying.

VANESSA:

I like it and that's that.

GOOSY:

In the States we hate everything we don't understand. It's a rule.

VANESSA:

We don't care about that here. **(Changing tone)**
So, what's it say?

GOOSY:

"The parties agree to the price of..."

VANESSA:

No, no, not that, the song.

GOOSY:

The song? Oh -- it says, "hey...Baby, baby, baby I love you, baby."

VANESSA:

And?

GOOSY:

That's it. That's all.

VANESSA:

What about that part? -- **(Waits for change)** That -- the part with a different beat.

GOOSY:

Oh. He's saying, "I love, love, love you baby love."

VANESSA:

You must really miss your country.

GOOSY:

Don't tempt me, sweetie.

(Going back to his reading) Here's the part you'll like:

"the buyer will pay the sum of 10,000 American dollars. Cash."

VANESSA:

What do you mean by "cash"?

GOOSY:

Bills. One on top of the other. **(Reading)** "...and, in exchange, the seller agrees to deliver the card from the collection entitled *THE NEW BASEBALL GAME*, manufactured in 1903 and bearing the figure of John Comiskey." What do you think?

VANESSA:

I don't think so.

GOOSY:

You don't think so!!

VANESSA:

Alfonso, my brother, says...

GOOSY:

Alfonso your brother. Alfonso your brother!

But. What is it that he wants?

He's been negotiating through you for two days already. And every half hour he changes his mind.

(He paces from side to side. Infuriated) ...He didn't like my previous offers and so this morning we agreed on \$10,000.

VANESSA:

We didn't agree.

GOOSY:

You said "Yes!"

VANESSA:

I was tired of talking about it.

GOOSY:

If you were so tired how did you manage to spend the whole afternoon riding around in that ridiculous limousine. Those things cost so much we don't even use them in my country. It's practically a sin.

VANESSA:

I like open spaces.

GOOSY:

And then, when you get back, instead of talking to me, or even saying a simple "hello," you ignore me to watch some stupid movie on the pay channel.

VANESSA:

It was stupid, but it was a learning experience. Do you want me to go without an education?

GOOSY:

What? But it was pornography!! Hard core triple X education!

VANESSA:

Exactly. And if I don't get it here, how will I ever learn?

GOOSY:

You should be in reform school. It's true, I'm telling you, minors should not watch those movies. They're PROHIBITED. You get what prohibited means, don't you?

VANESSA:

Of course.

GOOSY:

Good. PROHIBITED. PROHIBITED for anyone under thirty years old. And if they catch us they'll haul us both off to jail.

VANESSA:

Both of us?

GOOSY:

You for breaking the law and me for letting you.

VANESSA:

Don't make such a huge deal out of it.

GOOSY:

And if the moral and legal arguments don't convince you, then let me just remind you that it costs two dollars a minute.

VANESSA:

All part of the deal.

GOOSY:

Sure. Our deal. But there's never any agreement!
I'm ready to get out of here!
I'm not going to spend Christmas in this ridiculous country.
Forget it!!!
Anyways, I'm not asking you for any favors.
Do you know how much 10,000 dollars is in your money?

VANESSA:

Billions. Cash.

GOOSY:

So? You think that's nothing?

VANESSA:

It's got nothing to do with it.

GOOSY:

Nothing to do with it? Then, **WHAT DOES HAVE SOMETHING TO WITH IT?** Tell me! I can't do business like this. With nothing certain. With...with ghosts. You and a bicycle and a... **(looking at the Christmas tree)** a plastic scarecrow of a Christmas tree -- every time I look over there it sends a shock straight to my myocardium.

(He fumbles for a bottle of pills)

VANESSA:

The tree is depressing because it's plastic.

GOOSY:

It was the only one they could get.

VANESSA:

It doesn't even smell like anything. Maybe in your country you like all those fake things but here, if it's not real, if it doesn't have branches and dirt, then they call you an idiot. Someone you can cheat.

GOOSY:

(Swallows a pill without water) I'm not easy to fool.

VANESSA:

Goosy, even in baseball it all comes down to one thing. Everything. Training, playing, managing, even selling collector's cards. For it to last, it all depends on one thing.

GOOSY:

On what?

VANESSA:

On what you know.

GOOSY:

On what you know?

VANESSA:

The secret for the people who know. My brother knows -- he knows a lot and he says, "There are people who love baseball and then there are people who use it to make money." He hates businessmen and he says that in your country everyone worships money.

GOOSY:

There, here. Everywhere.

VANESSA:

And he told me, "When you want to deal with baseball people, make sure they know the game first. Only the people who know really love it."

GOOSY:

In this world there are all kinds of people,
obviously --

VANESSA:

That's why, if you're one of those business types, I don't even want to see you.

GOOSY:

But...

VANESSA:

(Starts putting on her bathing suit) ...but if you're someone who knows, then we can start talking about fifty thousand dollars.

GOOSY:

(Sits) Fifty thousand... Fine. That's what I wanted to know. **(To himself)** Cool. Good. Keep cool.**(To Vanessa)** It's a deal.

VANESSA:

Wait, first you have to prove that you love baseball.

GOOSY:

I love it. I love baseball, Vanessa. I...um...I'm a fanatic. I put on my cap, watch the games on T.V., I throw things and swear when my team blows it and I get depressed when they lose. And when they win I'm the happiest man on earth. See? **(Normal voice)** So, when do you want the fifty grand?

VANESSA:

Who's your team?

GOOSY:

My team? **(Vanessa nods)** I...for...uh.. The Yankees.Know who they are?

VANESSA:

Of course. **(Like a machine)** The mules of Manhattan. Twenty-nine times champion -- 1921, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 32, 36, 37, 38, 41, 42, 43, 46, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 55,56, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, and 64 with Yogi Berra as manager.

GOOSY:

I think you were wrong on one or two of those years.

VANESSA:

Who's your favorite team here?

GOOSY:

Here where?

VANESSA:

In this country. Who's your team?

GOOSY:

Jesus! How should I know? Here? I don't know. I don't really follow...

VANESSA:

See? You're no fanatic.

GOOSY:

Who cares about the teams in this country?

I didn't even know there was baseball. You're so poor here you probably don't even have stadiums or you play without gloves, or real bats. You probably use softballs or some crap like that. Maybe you even change the rules.

What do you people know about baseball?

VANESSA:

Plenty. More than you. We watch our leagues and yours. I know everything about the teams that play in the United States, their players, all their history. I have two favorites in each division and when the World Series comes around I shout and stomp like mad. And you, you don't know anything about my country. Or my team, the Lara Cardinals. Have you even heard of them?

GOOSY:

I know the Saint Louis Cardinals.

VANESSA:

It's not the same.

GOOSY:

Of course not. They're a real team.

VANESSA:

Mine were the champions for the 90-91 season, with Domingo Carrasquel as manager.

GOOSY:

That doesn't mean anything.

VANESSA:

Yes it does!!!

You're such an asshole!!!

GOOSY:

If you're thinking of biting me I should warn you that I haven't had my rabies shot.

VANESSA:

(Puts on suntan lotion) Who was Comiskey?

GOOSY:

Co...Comi...Co...Huh?

VANESSA:

Who was Comiskey? You know, the guy on the card that you want so much.

GOOSY:

Um...Comiskey. George...

VANESSA:

John.

GOOSY:

Right.

VANESSA:

Who was he?

GOOSY:

Um...of course, uh... A player.

VANESSA:

He wasn't a player. He was a manager.

GOOSY:

A manager?

VANESSA:

He founded the American League.

GOOSY:

Oh, of course. The American League.

VANESSA:

So you don't know what team John Comiskey was with.

GOOSY:

With...uh..Boston?

VANESSA:

Chicago. White Sox. That's why the stadium's called "Comiskey Park."
You sure don't know much. Too bad. **(Leaving)** I'm going down to the pool. See ya. **(Leaves)**

GOOSY:

(Furious) Little bitch!

Voice:

...The Cardinals score two more with five hits, a double, one steal and a homerun by the Latin American, Martinez. After two innings the home team leads 4-0.

THIRD INNING
December 22.

VANESSA:

Dear Diary,
Goosy, like everyone from his country, is always saying that he wants to get out of here.
He's so arrogant; he talks big and he thinks he knows everything.
He thinks I'm a just a child so I let him treat me like one.
Everything in his country is better. Over there everything works right.
Everyone here is poor. So we can't do anything right.
He's always saying he wants to leave.
He doesn't even like the food.
Where are the McDonald's? The people in his country don't even know **how** to eat. Still he says he wants to go.
I don't understand why. I've never even thought about going anywhere else.

**(Vanessa unloading things from bags.
During this scene Goosy is getting ready
to go out)**

VANESSA:

Hey, Goosy! Look what I got you. A record. From here. So you can see if you like it as much as the music from your country. That way you won't forget us, not even in a hundred years.

GOOSY:

I'm gonna everything about this place in about five minutes flat.

VANESSA:

And I got you a shirt with the name of the city and everything. This tourist stuff is the best. I don't get why people say it's so awful.

GOOSY:

This country will never be in style. And anyways, they just make that crap to take your money.

VANESSA:

Here, take this. **(Hands him a t-shirt)** It's nice. If it doesn't fit you can give it to... Do you have children?

GOOSY:

I...ah...I have a son.

VANESSA:

How old is he?

GOOSY:

Twenty-one.

VANESSA:

Ohhhhh! Twenty-one! How great. That's how old I want to be. Twenty-one. Twenty-one forever. So, where is he?

GOOSY:

At...at home.

VANESSA:

Where?

GOOSY:

In California.

VANESSA:

But you live in Miami.

GOOSY:

Right. Right. His name's Michael.

VANESSA:

You should call him to wish him a Merry Christmas.

GOOSY:

I write to him.

VANESSA:

Calling's better. Letters always get there too late. **(Picks up the phone)**
Operator, I'd like to place a call to California, please.

GOOSY:

Forget about it.

VANESSA:

Why?

GOOSY:

Sorry but I'm going out.

VANESSA:

Where are we going?

GOOSY:

I'm going alone.

VANESSA:

Alone. By yourself? Where?

GOOSY:

Why should I tell you? You're nothing to me. I must be at least five hundred years older than you.

VANESSA:

You shouldn't walk by yourself. The city is dangerous.

GOOSY:

And you're going to defend me?

VANESSA:

I know my way around.

GOOSY:

It's already the 22nd. December's practically over. I should have been back in the States by now. **(Puts on cologne)**

GOOSY: (CON'T)

Instead because of you, I'm still here. So don't fool yourself that, on top of everything -- bad manners, blackmail, cannibalism practically-- that I'm going stay here every night, cooped up with you.

VANESSA:

Fine. You can go out. But be home before eleven.

GOOSY:

You know who you look like right now? Tweety-bird. You know who he is?

VANESSA:

If I look like Tweety then you look like Yogi Bear.

GOOSY:

You, you're just like a helpless little animal, innocent as can be, and you make sure the poor cat suffers as much as possible. Well, I'm no pussy cat. And I'm not going to let you stab me in the back while you say "I tawt I taw a putty tat." Forget it.

VANESSA:

How about a snake?
Guess who wins between a cat and a snake.

GOOSY:

What? I don't care. Good-bye.

VANESSA:

I don't like being left alone.

GOOSY:

I don't like being with you. And I should tell you that the only reason that I agreed to let you spend these five VERY LONG AND TEDIOUS days here was because of our deal. I don't like you. At all. I agreed to this only because you promised me that I would meet Alfonso and we could wrap up the deal for John Comiskey.

GOOSY: (CON'T)

Anyway, if they find out you're staying here we could really be in trouble. Actually, it would be better if you weren't in the suite when I get back.

VANESSA:

Why?

GOOSY:

I might have company.

VANESSA:

But you don't know anyone.

GOOSY:

I have money. Money will introduce me to whoever I want.

VANESSA:

You mean women?

GOOSY:

Especially women.

VANESSA:

And where am I supposed to sleep tonight?

GOOSY:

That's your problem.

VANESSA:

I don't have anywhere to go.

GOOSY:

You can sleep down in the lobby. I'm sure they know you by now...

VANESSA:

It stinks.

GOOSY:

What stinks? The lobby?

VANESSA:

Your cologne. I have a better one. **(Opens one of the packages)** I was planning to give it to you tomorrow, for Christmas. Or maybe for New Year's.

GOOSY:

Don't worry about it, I don't plan to be here that long. **(Looking at the wrapping paper)** Nice drawings.

VANESSA:

I did them myself.

GOOSY:

You drew these?

VANESSA:

Last night. While you were sleeping. You know, I only do those things for people I really care about.

GOOSY:

And you care about me?

VANESSA:

This cologne'll be better on you.

GOOSY:

I have my own.

VANESSA:

Yours smells like fried toad.

GOOSY:

Really?

VANESSA:

Yeah, fried toad in garlic sauce. Rotten garlic.

GOOSY:

Give me that. **(Puts on the cologne)** It smells all right. **(Looking at the paper)** These are OK. I like your drawings. Do you know what they mean?

VANESSA:

What they mean? Of course.

GOOSY:

What?

VANESSA:

They're streets and buildings.

GOOSY:

These are streets and buildings?

VANESSA:

Sure, in a big city. With bridges. And big streets and malls.

GOOSY:

Where is the mall?

VANESSA:

(Points to it, obviously) Here.

GOOSY:

Oh. Right. There. A mall. What else could it be?

VANESSA:

They're very tall buildings, like in New York.

GOOSY:

You know New York?

VANESSA:

Not at all.

GOOSY:

So how do you know?

VANESSA:

Everyone knows there are tall buildings.

GOOSY:

(Points to something else) And what's this?

VANESSA:

A park.

GOOSY:

That small?

VANESSA:

I forgot about it so I just stuck it in afterwards.

GOOSY:

The people here seem to get along without parks too...

VANESSA:

But there are bridges.

GOOSY:

The bridges aren't for the people. They're for the cars. To get from one place to the other. People are beside the point.

VANESSA:

Well, I like the bridges.

GOOSY:

Looking at the drawings) Vanessa, do you know what these drawings really stand for, according to modern psychology?

(Vanessa shakes her head)

That you are immature, childish, and nervous. The strokes show that you tend to be unstable and the dots show you lack imagination.

VANESSA:

The dots mean that I don't have imagination?

GOOSY:

That's right. That's what the dots mean.

VANESSA:

Wow, poor Seurat.

GOOSY:

Seurat?

VANESSA:

He used dots too.

GOOSY:

What's that have to do with anything?

VANESSA:

That according to modern psychology, he lacks imagination...

GOOSY:

You just reminded me of Martin, my boss, he thinks there's some florist who paints Van Goghs.

VANESSA:

(Leaving)

Well, I won't wish you happy hunting tonight.

Come home whenever.

See if I care.

Anyway, you smell like fried toad.

With garlic.

What does modern psychology say about the smell of an old fried toad?

(Slams open the door and leaves)

GOOSY:

(Picks up the paper. Looks at it)

Fried toad. I think she's jealous.

Voice:

And that's the third inning, the Yankees make two singles, a double, and steal two, scoring two runs and making the score 4 to 2...

FOURTH INNING
December 24nd. Morning.

(The hotel suite in disarray. Vanessa enters)

VANESSA:

(Enters running) Ninth inning, you're down by one. Two outs. The count is three and one. Do you steal second? Goosy?

Do you steal or don't you?

Goosy? Where are you?

Goosy!!

(No response)

They said you were here.

(Into the phone)

Hello. Reception?

Yes, I'd like to know if my father, the man in room 566, got back to his room last night.

And when was that? At three!! And where is he now?

He hasn't gone out all day. No, no. That's all.

Wait! I want to make a call to the hospice "Santa Teresa."

The number's 461-7771.

(Hangs up. Looks around the room. Clothing on the floor. Liquor. Glasses)

I can't leave him alone for a minute. He's like a little boy. He does whatever he wants.

(Suddenly she hears voices from within the bedroom. She moves closer)

He's got someone with him. I better get out of here.

(As she is leaving the phone rings and she picks it up)

VANESSA:

Hello? **(Listens)** How is she...how is my mother?

(Listens) Could I talk with her? **(Happy)** Mom!!

How are you? Are you feeling OK? Did you get your presents yet? No, I couldn't stay, but they said you're doing much better. **(Listens)** There's all kinds of music and people in the streets. And lots of men dressed up like Santa Claus and Jesus.

VANESSA: (CON'T)

I was just calling 'cause I didn't have anything to do. I was alone and I saw the telephone.

No, no. I'm not sad.

Only at twelve o'clock.

I know tomorrow's the only time that matters. But it's sad anyways. I mean, every day when I hear the bells I think about how I'm not going to be with you.

That day.

Don't cry.

I'm sorry too. I am.

I miss him too

I know, Mom. He'd be in the majors... But don't... don't think about it so much, because it just makes you sad. Today's Christmas. I'll get you out of there as soon as I can.

I'll have money soon.

(Listens) I'm sleeping fine, in a real palace.

(Listens) The home there isn't so bad, Mom. **(Listens)** OK, OK, It is bad.

(Listens) It's a dump.

(A noise, then laughter from the bedroom. Vanessa hides.)

I have to go now. I'll call soon. No, nothing's wrong... Merry Christmas.

I'll call again on New Year's Eve. Take care of yourself.

(Goosy comes out. Half-dressed)

GOOSY:

(To the room) ...You stay in there.

(He goes over to a vase. Takes out a wallet hidden there. Counts out money. As he is going back he discovers Vanessa)

Oh, a Putty tat.

(Threatening) What the hell are you doing here?

VANESSA:

I live here.

GOOSY:

You do not live here. I live here. By myself. I told you to stay away from here. Why didn't you knock?

VANESSA:

I never knock.

GOOSY:

Never, no. Don't say never. That sounds like a lifetime.
We've barely known each other for a couple of days and you're saying "never."

VANESSA:

Six days.

GOOSY:

Whatever. Get out of here, Vanessa.

VANESSA:

Who's in there with you?

GOOSY:

Ah... that's... no one.

VANESSA:

So, you were talking to yourself?

GOOSY:

That's none of your business.

VANESSA:

I'm not an idiot, you know.

GOOSY:

No, of course not. You're a Tweety bird.

VANESSA:

It's a woman.

GOOSY:

It seemed that way to me.

VANESSA:

Did you sleep with her?

GOOSY:

No. Yes. This... you can't understand.

VANESSA:

Of course I understand. I saw it all on the prohibited channel for two dollars a minute. I know what you did. Naked, groans...."Oh, oh." And all that.

GOOSY:

Get out of here...please.

VANESSA:

Can I meet her?

GOOSY:

Who?

VANESSA:

Her.

GOOSY:

Her. Her. You mean... her? Of course not.
You could... you could get me in real trouble.
You're a minor.

VANESSA:

I'll bet she's not any older than I am. What's her name?

GOOSY:

What do I know.

VANESSA:

You would think you'd feel -- curious about it. You could ask her name.

GOOSY:

But she... she's... I shouldn't even be talking to you like this. Leave and come back later.

(Standing in the doorway. To the woman inside)

...Cool it. It's sort of a girl... no, she's not my daughter... o.k, if that's what you want...

(To Vanessa, furious)

Now she wants to leave.

And you're going right after her!!

VANESSA:

Where will you spend Christmas?

GOOSY:

Not with you. She has to leave now.

VANESSA:

So let her.

GOOSY:

I don't want you watching.

VANESSA:

Fine. I'll close my eyes.

GOOSY:

And turn around.

VANESSA:

Of course.

GOOSY:

Now!

VANESSA:

(Turned away) ...I'll just say hello...

GOOSY:

It'd be better if you didn't.
(Opens the door a little) Get ready...

VANESSA:

(Turns around) I've seen this stuff on T.V. They do everything and you can see it all. What else is there? I know exactly what's going on. It's no big deal. Why act like it is?

GOOSY:

Vanessa close your eyes...

VANESSA:

OK! Whatever.

(Vanessa closes her eyes)

GOOSY:

And do not turn around.

VANESSA:

Even if I've never seen one... in real life.
Is she gone?

Voice:

The fourth runs out on the Cards, 1-2-3.

The local boys never even saw what hit them. And the game goes on:

Yankees 2, Cardinals 4.

FIFTH INNING
December 24th. Night.

(Goosy, aside, into a small microphone)

GOOSY:

Always, I am waiting for the pain to come, that final pain. One that will last a hundred years and will never leave me. That will take up all my days and nights and all my thoughts and will never leave me. A pain that has been waiting for me.

A situation that will come and never leave me. And I imagine you, my son, as part of this. I imagine you responsible in this future, that it is already here and will not let me go.

(Suite. Goosy, threatening, facing Vanessa)

GOOSY:

My last, and final offer is sixty thousand. **(Looks at her)** So, what do you think?

VANESSA:

Fine with me.

GOOSY:

(He offers her his hand) Deal?

VANESSA:

It depends.

GOOSY:

DEPENDS ON WHAT?

VANESSA:

Ninth Inning. You're down by one. Two outs and the count is three and one. Do you steal second?

GOOSY:

Second base...

VANESSA:

Do you steal or don't you?

GOOSY:

Yeah, sure.

VANESSA:

No. You don't. You jeopardize the whole game.

GOOSY:

So what?

VANESSA:

It's the game. The most important thing is the game. If you were really a fanatic there would only be one answer.

GOOSY:

So fine. Who sent you?

VANESSA:

Sent what?

GOOSY:

Who do you work for?

VANESSA:

I don't work.

GOOSY:

Maybe for Fler? Who's paying you?

VANESSA:

Mr. Fler?

GOOSY:

An agency. A stinking agency that does everything it can to ruin me. And they do a good job. Well, I mean every time they've wanted to...

VANESSA:

I don't know anything about them.

GOOSY:

...Two years ago they almost drove me out of the business completely. What do they care if I starve? Well -- if you don't work for Fler, how do you know so much?

VANESSA:

It's got nothing to do with knowing so much. It's the game. Thinking about the game and the book. Have you heard about the book?

GOOSY:

The book?

VANESSA:

It's a handbook, one you keep in your head. An imaginary one. But it tells what you can and can't do. Experience shows how things work and what doesn't. Stick to the book, play conservative, play with experience. You go against the book, you take the risk.

(She moves him over by his briefcase on the table. Goes far stage right. Turns to face him)

VANESSA:

You're up by eleven runs. You have a man on third. No outs. Do you make the squeeze play or not?

GOOSY:

Sure, why not?

VANESSA:

No. No. You don't. And you know why? It's a lack of respect for the other team. You don't need that run. There's no reason to humiliate the other team with your strength. The important thing is knowing how to win. Knowing how to win well. Knowing how to be strong. Respect for the losing team, because everyone who loses has something in his favor.

GOOSY:

Losers have nothing, Vanessa.

VANESSA:

Honor.

GOOSY:

The winner has that.

VANESSA:

Victory makes him forget.

GOOSY:

I've lost plenty of times and it doesn't feel like honor. I've been sad, sure, disgusted, usually furious. Mostly, I feel hate, most of the time, but honor, that's -- that's never. I don't know what you're talking about.

VANESSA:

You're a businessman. Because you're not a fan.

GOOSY:

I'd rather be what I am than some eleven year old girl who thinks she's got everything on her side!

VANESSA:

I'm fourteen! There's no way I can talk with someone who doesn't love my game.

GOOSY:

And you, what do you know about anything? How do you know I don't love baseball? Because I don't play along with your idiotic questions? So what? What does a fifteen-year-old girl know about anything?

(Begins furiously jamming papers into the briefcase)

When I was young I wanted to be a player.
A pitcher.
Southpaw. I'd be there to put out the fires, the star relief.

I'd be one of the greats.
That dream lasted only two years because the war came. Just the name still terrifies me. It was over quick, but it was a nightmare every second. I only thank God I got wounded and could get out that jungle. I don't want to go back there... even the name, out of my head -- I don't want its memories.

(Slams briefcase shut)

But when I got back I started getting pains, here in my arm, strong, sharp pains. They operated so I could never throw again.
So I did painting. Florals, like Van Gogh, but cooler.
Calming dots like Seurat... Now, I know more about painting than MOMA. But, those sketches... there was always one line that looked like shit, it never failed. That one line!
And you paint your bridges and streets and buildings with dots...
Fucking dots, damnit!
No baseball for me, no art, no game, nothing except:
business.

VANESSA:

Business...

GOOSY:

Yes, because business means MONEY, little girl. That's right, smartass. MONEY. The same reason you're here, the same reason you're driving such a hard bargain. MONEY. Di - Ne - Ro. Cash, Vanessa. Buying power. The secret to everything.

VANESSA:

God loves the poor.

GOOSY:

But he takes such good care of the rich.

VANESSA:

I'm not listening to you!

GOOSY:

Now you don't want to listen? We shouldn't talk about the money, filthy, dirty money... Sure, what's it to you. You're fourteen. You're just a snot nosed brat. You don't have responsibilities. But everyone, I...everyone has to pay. The car, the ex, the house, the restaurant, the pizza, my pacemaker, Michael's box... Every goddamn thing.

VANESSA:

Box. Why box?

GOOSY:

...Do you know when I found out the value of money? That day, I was shaving, I was stuck in front of the mirror, and I could see it on my face that my savings account was completely gone. I had hit rock bottom. There were no deposits. Only withdrawals. I've never been so terrified in my life, not even during the war.

VANESSA:

...What Michael's box?

GOOSY:

It's none of your business. Leave me alone.
(Vanessa stares at him)
Michael's box...it's a cold place. A coffin where I've kept him for seven years. He had a stroke. He died. Michael's been frozen at 196 degrees below zero for seven years. He should be twenty-eight now, he is, and first baseman for the California Angels, or maybe the Dodgers.
(Walking away)

Keeping him there is like a hope...maybe in the future, when I'm old or even dead already, doctors will find a cure for him and bring him back to me.

For the World Series in 2029.

Every month that hope costs me all the money in the world.

VANESSA:

I'm sorry.

GOOSY:

It doesn't bother me anymore. Sometimes I think I'm wrong.

Maybe they'll never come up with a cure for those diseases. And maybe it's all just a trick to cheat gullible people out of their money

I'm too trusting, even if you might not believe it. Martin says I'm too emotional. He's probably right. You hold on to what you can. So you don't end up alone. Life and passion are one thing, but money is another, with all the responsibilities and the people you have to put up with to get it, just to spend a fraction of your time in peace.

VANESSA:

I didn't mean to hurt you.

GOOSY:

...Fighting with the boss, your everyday life and then with people like you who go around reminding everyone about every little thing they do wrong.

Why can't they understand there's no other way?
What's so wonderful about throwing it in our face
-- we know what we wanted to be. We know what we are.

VANESSA:

(On the verge of tears) I'm sorry, really. I'm sorry...

GOOSY:

Well, if you wanted to see me in pain, you...

(Just then, Goosy has a heart attack and begins to fall)

GOOSY:

My pills... my...

VANESSA:

What?

GOOSY:

My pills!

VANESSA:

Where?

(Goosy cries out and falls)

VANESSA:

Wait... wake up... wake up...

What should I do?

wait, don't look like that. Goosy... **(Shouts)** Help!

(She lifts his head)

Don't go away, wait, wait, wait just a second.

(Goosy gets another pain)

Voice:

That's the end of the fifth inning, with a double play, a steal, and a Texas leaguer that dropped like a cold bullet. With a light rain threatening to call the game, the scoreboard shows:

Yankees 2, Cardinals 4.

SIXTH INNING

December 27

(Aside)

VANESSA:

Dear Diary,
Today my brother Alfonso was late getting home.
I was scared to death -- when they turn out the lights there are shadows on the walls and they move in the silence. They know that I see them...and that they scare me...even if I do know they can't do anything.
I know, don't say it. There's nothing wrong with thinking that they're monsters. I did when I was little.
I have to hold on to a lot of things.

(Lights. Same scene. Goosy, sitting on bed)

GOOSY:

(To telephone) ...Martin... Martin... no... Martin...It's not like that...
Everything's under control.
(Listens) Don't shout. Martin. Martin!
(Listens) ...The negotiations have been hard. These people are tough.
What they are like? Ah... Who? The negotiators?
Well, they are...ah...it's two guys. Right, two hot shots, around my age, sixties. They come with their laptops and cellular phones. You know the type. It's all very well prepared. These guys, they train them in the United States.
(Listens) I haven't gotten emotional again.
At the moment we're talking about that much.
Right. Sixty thousand.
Did you see the copy? What do your people say?
(Listens)
It's the only one in the world?
It's worth...
We can sell it for...
How much???
TWO MILLION!!!
Jesus! Not even a Van Gogh!
(Listens) "Van Gogh." The painter.

No, he's not a florist. Van Gogh is a painter who...who Mitsubishi just made a Japanese citizen.

(Listens) Have you contacted the Japanese?

Excellent. Don't forget my commission!

(Vanessa enters, from the bedroom)

Don't worry. Everything's under control, Martin. I'll be back tomorrow. One more day and I'll have it all wrapped up. **(Sees Vanessa, hesitates)** Sh...the...negotiators are here.

VANESSA:

From up here you can see down the street with all the lights and Christmas decorations.

GOOSY:

Good-bye. Sure, I'll call you later. Good-bye. Good-bye.

Bye. **(Hangs up)**

VANESSA:

How do you feel today? You look great. It's because I take such good care of you, fussing over you all the time. Tomorrow we'll go out. The stores are full of people. Everyone's waiting for New Year's.

Who were you talking to?

GOOSY:

With my wife in Chicago.

VANESSA:

New York. Your wife's in New York. You should learn how to lie.

GOOSY:

I never lie. **(Looking at her)** What's that on your eyes?

VANESSA:

Eye shadow. Makeup. You like it?

GOOSY:

You look like a watercolor, some kind of painting.

VANESSA:

That's how it's done.

GOOSY:

Don't you think it's a little too much... I mean too much... Too big for a twelve-year-old girl?

VANESSA:

First of all, I'm nearly fifteen. I'm not going to fall for that. And it's not the end of the world, so excuse me but I'm sorry. It's only eye shadow and if you're really fourteen you've been using it for three years already. You don't like boys your own age and you'd rather go out with someone who's seventeen or eighteen, preferably if they can get their father's car.

GOOSY:

You grow up sooner.

VANESSA:

Who?

GOOSY:

Kids like you. It didn't used to be like that. Used to be you grew up later. You were eighteen and you still played with toy cars and model planes.

VANESSA:

What would you do if you were fourteen now?

GOOSY:

Find out about all this stuff you're telling me about. **(On the offensive)**
And what would you do if you were sixty?

VANESSA:

I think I'd buy everything I could and be cleaned out in about two hours.

GOOSY:

And tomorrow?

VANESSA:

Tomorrow? What's tomorrow?

GOOSY:

Spending all your money -- what are you going to live on?

VANESSA:

Well, if I spent everything, obviously I wouldn't have to spend anything for at least a month, 'cause I'd be living on what I bought.

GOOSY:

And after that month, OK. Then what would you do?

VANESSA:

After a month... a month?... so. What do I care about what comes after a month! I'm a little old lady, remember, I'm sixty! Right?

GOOSY:

Old, no. More like...mature.

(Rubs chest, moves slowly to window)

VANESSA:

Same thing.

GOOSY:

Unfortunately, my heart here thinks like you do.

VANESSA:

What would you do if you were president?

GOOSY:

If I was president.. ah... I think I'd... I don't know. I have no idea. Why, what would you do?

VANESSA:

If I was President, we'd have baseball all year long, with all different championships and cups.
And there'd be a Big League for women too.
School would only go for four months a year and I'd make all the children travel so they'd find out about the world, how big, and different, and totally strange it all is. So they'd meet people from other countries, people with other languages and different lives.

GOOSY:

All that...

VANESSA:

I'd do more... I'd play music.

GOOSY:

Music.

VANESSA:

Music on T.V. and on the radio. I'd make schools teach the latest music from every country. To be up to date. I'd make night start hours later, like at twelve or one, so that everyone would have time to walk around and go shopping after work.

GOOSY:

You'd have to be God.

VANESSA:

And if you were God, what would you do?

GOOSY:

I'd straighten everything out. Sure.

VANESSA:

Like what?

GOOSY:

Everything, Vanessa. Everything -- everything that's screwed up. Life, it's always the same mistakes. These cities. And money...

GOOSY: (CON'T)

I'd fix time, time that gets lost and then you don't have enough of it. And, most of all, if I was God, I'd forbid death.

VANESSA:

If I was God that's what I'd do too.

GOOSY:

That makes two of us.

VANESSA:

Nothing like dying, not anymore.

GOOSY:

(Turns away from window) So do we agree on sixty grand? How about it?

VANESSA:

My brother is coming to see you tomorrow.

GOOSY:

Finally! Where are you going?

VANESSA:

(Sad) I'm going out. **(Drops purse, coat. Wipes at her eyes)** I have to know what time it will be when the sun sets tomorrow.

She throws herself on the bed with a newspaper in hand.

GOOSY:

Time?

(Vanessa, muffled sobs)

Voice:

The Yankees roar back with two runs, after three back-to-back hits, a wild pitch, and a walk. It's been six full innings and the game is tied up at four.

SEVENTH INNING
December 29th.

GOOSY:

(Weary) Never in my life have I spent a day this long. You've made me sit and watch television for twelve straight hours.

During the holidays.

VANESSA:

You're very sick.

GOOSY:

My heart, not my head.

VANESSA:

I have to keep you entertained.

GOOSY:

Where is this mysterious brother of yours? You said he was coming to visit me... So we could meet face to face. Where is he?

VANESSA:

Oh, Alfonso? He has a big game right now. He'll talk to you when he's finished.

GOOSY:

Your...ah...your brother is a player? Here?

VANESSA:

One of the hot prospects. He's on a farm team right now, but he's a first class short stop with good legs. They say he'll walk into the majors any day now.

GOOSY:

Hey, Vanessa, I could help him out. I've got contacts in The Show. I know teams in... If we take him with us, if he comes with me, I could fix it for him, easy. You know... get things moving...

VANESSA:

That would be great.

GOOSY:

Done. He's coming with me. It's part of the Comiskey deal, OK? In Miami, they've said I could raise my offer to 80 thousand dollars. Eighty. That'll be a lot of money for you. And, your brother, I can help him into the majors. Pay for training, get him residency in the U.S. For him and you.

VANESSA:

But I don't want to leave here.

GOOSY:

Right, but I'll bet your brother is dying to travel.

VANESSA:

He doesn't want to go either.

GOOSY:

Does he want to play ball? (**Vanessa nods**)
The real thing, the good kind, the way it is?
(**Vanessa nods**)
Then he'll have to go.

VANESSA:

(**Leaving**) I hate you when you talk that way about my country.

GOOSY:

Wait... wait... It's OK. I'm sorry. I don't mean to argue. It's just between your country and mine... there are differences and you always think that it's the same with the people. You always think that they are cheating you. Maybe that's why we can't stand each other.

VANESSA:

I didn't say I can't stand you.

GOOSY:

I'm talking about your country and mine.

VANESSA:

I like your country.

GOOSY:

Yes, and no. You and your brother don't trust...and you're right. There's a long history there. A lot has happened. Invasions, governments overthrown, burned flags. Especially mine.

VANESSA:

Why do they burn your flag?

GOOSY:

Politics. It seems like it's always our fault if anything goes wrong down here. That's what they think.

VANESSA:

Not me.

GOOSY:

You too, Vanessa. You know that I cheat...

VANESSA:

I still trust you.

GOOSY:

You shouldn't.

VANESSA:

Why not?

GOOSY:

Because, if you want to sell, you have to negotiate. And to negotiate you have to negotiate hard. And to negotiate hard you can't trust. If you trust, you're sunk. One time or another, sooner or later, they get you.

VANESSA:

Why do you want to hurt me?

GOOSY:

(Taking out the pistol) I want the card. You want to sell it to me. Fine. Deal with me. But don't expect trust... If you want trust then you shouldn't sell it to me.

VANESSA:

(Referring to the pistol) Why do you have to wave that thing around every time you get upset?

(Pause. Goosy looks at it)

GOOSY:

It's a piece of another time. A souvenir.
Like a ring, like old photos. I like to show it to people. So they'll see that I was in the war. That I know how to fight.

VANESSA:

Did you kill anyone?

(Pause)

GOOSY:

I...

VANESSA:

Did you kill anyone?

GOOSY:

Ah...Of course. Of course, it was a war and in wars people kill each other. OK?

VANESSA:

People killing each other.

GOOSY:

You're following orders. It's you or them.

VANESSA:

So, how many did you kill?

GOOSY:

Ah... I don't know.

VANESSA:

Approximately.

GOOSY:

Ten...twenty, maybe more.

VANESSA:

Twenty people?

GOOSY:

Soldiers.

VANESSA:

That's a lot.

GOOSY:

I don't want to talk about it anymore.

VANESSA:

We won't talk about it anymore.

GOOSY:

Right. Enough said.

VANESSA:

Not another word... If it hurts you, we won't talk.

GOOSY:

It doesn't hurt.

VANESSA:

You're the one shouting. You sound like a little kid who stung his fingers on a fast ball.

GOOSY:

Let's not talk about it.

(Throws gun back in briefcase)

VANESSA:

OK. Are you OK?

GOOSY:

(Looks at her) It doesn't bother me to talk about it.
Talking doesn't bother me. It doesn't... really. I mean it.
You kill them, and kill them, but at the same time they mark you for life.
I'm marked, my country is... Forever.
They had eyes like those, like yours. Don't look at me like that. I don't
want you to look at me... please.

VANESSA:

(Suddenly sweet) What happens if you have a right handed power
hitter, bases loaded and two outs?

GOOSY:

I myself would send in a left-handed pitcher.

VANESSA:

That's it...

GOOSY:

And I'd send him to the showers.

VANESSA:

OK, you know, you know enough.

(Kisses him)

GOOSY:

Thanks.

(Then a short pause)

VANESSA:

Even if it was an easy question!

(He chases her. Vanessa runs, laughing)

Voice:

Four hits, a sacrifice, two stolen bases, a catch by the short stop that's one for the records and a double play to cut off two more runs. In the seventh inning the Yankees make a total of two runs and go up six to four.

EIGHTH INNING
December 31st.

(Aside)

VANESSA:

Dear Diary,
Christmas is almost over.
Remember how afraid I was to spend it alone?
Remember how last Christmas was -- like when you go to the stadium for a game, you're right there and they make this great play and for some reason, who knows why, you miss it because you were looking the other way?
And they end up telling you all about it.
Remember what I wrote about Christmas and baseball, how they're the same because they're both better on T.V.
That way you can catch the replay.

(Hotel suite. Goosy and Vanessa dressed for a party. Center stage, a bottle of champagne, grapes, turkey and nuts)

VANESSA:

I ordered the most expensive champagne. Two bottles, one for you and one for me.

I can have some of this without you reporting me to the Juvenile Court, right? It looks delicious.

...These last few days I think I've gotten allergic to sadness.

Five more minutes to the New Year.

Can we put on some music? The radio? ...this is great...

GOOSY:

After New Year's -- the day after tomorrow I'm leaving. For the United States.

(Pause)

VANESSA:

(Tense) You can't.

GOOSY:

Why not?

VANESSA:

Ah...because...because...(Nervous) It's only been six days since that happened with your heart. Besides, today's the 31st. The end of the year... And you have to start the New Year right, calmly... think out your plans... You should write down what you want to happen. Schedule things. You can't move. Not for fifteen days at least .

GOOSY:

Who said that?

VANESSA:

The doctor.

GOOSY:

There was no doctor.

VANESSA:

Because you wouldn't let me call one!

GOOSY:

(Walking toward the window) We need to talk.

VANESSA:

You shouldn't talk. Your heart is bad.

GOOSY:

You don't talk with your heart.

VANESSA:

It's hurt. It's broken.

GOOSY:

Mended.

VANESSA:

Whatever. It's a disease so there'll be no more discussion.

GOOSY:

Vanessa, what happened to me was a heart attack.

A pre-attack, really.

I'm sentenced to die from it, but it never happens.

At least, never in any decisive way.

I don't know, maybe I'm very strong physically.

But, my desire, my will to go on living is...it's a real wimp, you know?

Last night, while you were sleeping I couldn't do anything but sit here and watch you.

It's that, watching out for you like that, it made me want to go on living.

I've got to fix things. Put an end to this fantasy about my son, so he can rest peacefully. And that's, that's why, I want to go so soon.

I have the feeling that I've thrown away so much time in my life already doing what I've been doing...

I mean that your vacation and mine are over.

VANESSA:

My...vacation?

GOOSY:

The reason you kept me here for the whole week of Christmas.

VANESSA:

(Vanessa looks at him, trapped) You knew?

GOOSY:

Everyone makes up stories about the things they want. Like you made up a brother and called him Alfonso.

VANESSA:

What...

(Turns away. Begins playing with the radio, rapidly tuning through stations which only play hard rock)

What...what are you trying to say?

GOOSY:

It's obvious that Alfonso doesn't exist.

(Pause)

VANESSA:

How do you know?

GOOSY:

Because when you're talking about an 80,000 dollar deal people want to see who they are dealing with, in person. Because everyone spends the last day of the year with the people they love. And you didn't. And if you didn't it can only mean one thing:

he doesn't exist.

(Vanessa, panicked)

VANESSA:

You knew the whole time and you were laughing at me.

GOOSY:

No, no, no. I wouldn't laugh at you. In my country we might talk tough, but we panic at the idea of being alone.

When you fear something, you respect it. It's just you, you're acting alone in this, aren't you?

VANESSA:

I'm with my mother.

GOOSY:

And where is she?

VANESSA:

She's in a private hospital. With the nuns. She's sick. She has injuries... lots of injuries. She almost died in the accident. You're wrong about Alfonso. Alfonso does exist. He does. But he's just not here, in this world.

GOOSY:

What happened?

(Pause)

Vanessa.

(Pause)

Tell me.

(Pause)

I told you everything.

(Pause)

VANESSA:

Two Christmases ago...

(Pause) It was a Saturday and it was raining.

We were on the highway. Going to one of Alfonso's games. Actually, it was his...his first game.

So, we were listening to the radio. Good music, something American.

Then, I closed my eyes. There was this noise, this really, really loud noise.

I always close my eyes like that, when strange things happen.

The first thing that happened was that...After the noise, it stopped raining.

For a few seconds it stopped raining and then it was nighttime.

But just for a few seconds.

Then, there was a crash. And someone screaming.

I closed my eyes even though it was already night.

The rain was still stopped, like frozen in place. Or falling very slowly but in a different time. I don't know.

(Pause)

My mother says that I called for her.

We were spinning to one side, then to the other.

We fell for a few seconds. It was hours. It was so long.

I was going to cry, but I didn't.

So I decided to keep very still. Not even to move a little bit.

...Then I opened my eyes. It had stopped raining.

When I woke up my brother was already dead.

GOOSY:

Dear God...Vanessa, sweetheart...

VANESSA:

We were in a hospital. Surrounded by doctors and stretchers.

GOOSY:

Your brother -- Alfonso...

VANESSA:

There was blood everywhere, all over him, but he hadn't cut himself. I never understood that. Even telling you about it now, it seems strange. Where did it come from?

GOOSY:

I'm sorry...I'm sorry, Vanessa...

VANESSA:

It hurt inside -- hurting was breathing. It's still in me and there's been no place for happiness, not in two Christmases of hurt.

Then two weeks ago we met. You were sad, you with your heart. And I had mine. And then it almost happened.

(Short pause)

I want to believe that it was me.

GOOSY:

If you hadn't been with me, I'd be...

(Vanessa blasts radio)

GOOSY:

Vanessa!

(Vanessa turns off the radio)

VANESSA:

(Quietly) Please, don't say it. Goosy, I want other Christmases. I want to know things about your country, the way I like. You can meet my mom. I want you to meet her.

VANESSA: (CON'T)

You could have someone to call and we wouldn't have to lie about anything, not even the stupid little things.

You could even stay.

(Short pause. Steps away from radio towards him)

Who'll take care of you there?

GOOSY:

It's true.

(Pause)

Who else is there?

VANESSA:

(Very close) You know that you don't have to be alone all the time.

GOOSY:

(Quiet) There's you.

VANESSA:

(Turns away, flips on the radio)

After, all I saved you.

GOOSY:

(Turns away. Pours champagne)

It's true.

(Goosy laughs a little. It hurts)

VANESSA:

(Radio on loud thumping music) Why is it always so loud?

(Suddenly, they hear fireworks. Clocks chiming, music and distant laughter)

VANESSA:

Oh. **(With relief)** Yeah, the year is over.

GOOSY:

Good-bye. And good riddance. What did you wish for?

VANESSA:

Just a second.

GOOSY:

What?

VANESSA:

That your heart never breaks.

GOOSY:

Thanks a lot Vanessa.

VANESSA:

What about you? What'd you wish for?

GOOSY:

To take you to the World Series.

VANESSA:

(Toasting) Happy New Year!
(She kisses him)

GOOSY:

Happy New Year, sweetheart.

(They both drink champagne. Vanessa drinks hers in one gulp. Goosy watches her. She fills her glass again and drinks more slowly. They look at each other)

Voice:

With five singles, and a triple, even sensational playing by the home team still couldn't pull the plug on the Yankees powerhouse, playing in top form here tonight. They bring in three more runs and open up their lead, nine to four.

NINTH INNING

January 2nd.

(Goosy, writing)

GOOSY:

Dearest Vanessa,

...One day you will find love and...Not that stuff you see on television, and not just sex -- which you've also seen -- not that. You can't count on it. It never lasts. I'm sure of it. The love I'm talking about means for someone...someone else, someone you love more than yourself. I think you'll be sure, you'll feel it when it happens. It will be beautiful, Vanessa -- or it could be. But in any case you'll know. And when that happens to you, I hope you'll please call me. So I can know too. **(Pause)** Invite me to the wedding, send me pictures of the kids, whatever. If you need anything, you can count on me. Take care.

**(Goosy seals the envelope.
Lights up. Hotel suite. Suitcases. There
is no longer a Christmas tree.
Everything packed away. Vanessa,
closing a package)**

GOOSY:

Did you bring it?

VANESSA:

(Showing him an envelope) It's here. And your part?

GOOSY:

(With a briefcase) Vanessa, I know I've said it a hundred times already but I want to make sure you understand; you are probably the only girl... **(Looks at her)** the only almost fifteen year old in this entire continent that would go out on the streets of one of the most violent cities in the world carrying a very suspicious looking briefcase containing nothing less than eighty thousand U.S. dollars in small bills.

VANESSA:

(Holding the briefcase) You're being theatrical.

GOOSY:

It IS theatrical.

VANESSA:

You sound like one of those movies we just saw.

GOOSY:

Are you going to count it?

VANESSA:

It would take the whole day and your flight leaves in two hours.

GOOSY:

You can stay here for the rest of the day...use the pool...ride your bike.

VANESSA:

I don't want to.

GOOSY:

It's already paid for.

VANESSA:

I don't want to stay here alone.

GOOSY:

Where will you go now?

VANESSA:

Home. I'm going to hide the money.

GOOSY:

I'd advise you to take it to a bank.

VANESSA:

...and exchange it a little at the time. When I need it.

GOOSY:

What are you going to do?

VANESSA:

I'll take care of my mother and with the money I'll buy her a house. I don't know. He, Alfonso, is dead. But I'm not. Maybe go to your country. Live somewhere else.

...Later on -- I don't know. What'll you do?

GOOSY:

Me?

VANESSA:

What about you?

GOOSY:

I'm going to work. I need to get this to the office. There will be an auction.

There's still a lot to do.

VANESSA:

The deal.

GOOSY:

The last one, for me.

VANESSA:

If you need money, call me...

GOOSY:

Also, I'm going to...to bury him. My son, I mean, Michael. Maybe try to find a job in the minors, maybe with the Yankees. I could do anything. I'll sleep better. Especially if I move out of the city. And maybe I'll have the time to come back and visit you. You could show me around.

VANESSA:

It could be better here, I know.

GOOSY:

The weather's good.

VANESSA:

You'll be able to find me.

GOOSY:

Don't you have an address or something you can give me?

(Vanessa doesn't answer. Goosy lowers his head. Looks at the card)

GOOSY:

I can't understand how one small piece of paper can be worth so much.

VANESSA:

It's the passion for the game.

GOOSY:

Baseball? The passion for baseball?

(Absently puts card on top of the briefcase)

VANESSA:

Passion keeps it all going, is what.

(Vanessa takes hold of the bicycle)

GOOSY:

Wait up...don't go.

VANESSA:

What's wrong?

GOOSY:

One more deal you didn't tell me -- The snake and the cat. Who wins?

VANESSA:

When you put a snake and a cat together, the cat watches the snake's eyes without blinking and the snake picks up its head as high as it can. And meantime it tries to -- what's the word -- coil, coil itself up tight so it can strike and bite the cat...But the cat keeps walking in circles around the snake and the snake has to follow her eyes. The cat keeps the snake turning around and around going in exactly the opposite direction that the snake is trying to roll itself up. When the snake realizes that it cannot get coiled, it gets nervous.

GOOSY:

And that's when the pussy cat pounces, covers the snake's eyes and sinks in its claws.

(The telephone rings)

GOOSY:

So much for the snake.

(Vanessa turns away, suddenly interested in the kickstand. Phone rings again.)

GOOSY:

We can't lose, right?
(Phone rings again. Goosy picks it up)
Yes! I'll be right down. My call to Miami?
(To Vanessa) They're waiting to take me to the airport.

VANESSA:

Goosy, I hope -- I haven't bothered you.

GOOSY:

(Picking up the envelope) Of course you bothered me.

VANESSA:

I'm sorry.

GOOSY:

Don't be silly.

VANESSA:

I'm sorry. Do you understand?

GOOSY:

I understand, Vanessa.

VANESSA:

Are you sure?

GOOSY:

Of course!

(Vanessa, leaving)

VANESSA:

I'll call to see how you're doing.

GOOSY:

Good-bye.

VANESSA:

Bye.

**(They continue to look at each other.
Vanessa lets go of the bike. She runs to
him and gives him a kiss)**

GOOSY:

Listen:

Runner on first, second inning, third bat. You're the home team. Do you bunt or don't you?

VANESSA:

No.

GOOSY:

Because you have to have faith...

VANESSA:

...in the strength of the team.

GOOSY:

(Giving her his letter) Take this... Maybe read it sometime later... tomorrow. When you get a chance.

VANESSA:

Let's not talk anymore.

**(Vanessa takes the bike and goes out
without turning around)**

GOOSY:

That wasn't so emotional. Everything worked out.

(The telephone rings. He answers it)

GOOSY:

Hello?

Martin. I've got it.

(Laughing)

Yes, it was tough...tough...

This could be the biggest deal of our lives. Right?

Millionaires and we retire.

Yes, in mint condition. I'm leaving for Miami in two hours.

Congratulations.

Thank you...

Thanks...

Two million dollars. That's incredible, Martin, incredible.

(Suddenly, looking at it. He stops laughing. He holds it up to the light)

GOOSY:

What is this?

(After a terrible pause)

Oh my God!

My God!

It's a fake!

She cheated me!

(He drops the telephone. Yanks open the door. Crashes over the Christmas tree)

Vanessa! Vanessa! Wait!

Its a fake!

(He starts to laugh, enough to hurt)

I guess this makes me the snake.

(He laughs even louder)

What a play! Good legs.

(Looking at the paper. To the telephone)

OK, maybe I can use that play on someone else.

Hey? Martin? Thought I was having another heart attack, didn't you?

(Laughing) No, nothing's wrong. Just one bad call.

Hey Martin? Martin?

Listen! The food down here's not so bad after all.

(Hangs up)

(Laughing like mad)

This could call for extra innings.

Voice:

...And with a desperate offensive at the last minute, the Lara Cardinals pull out six runs to break the Yankees' streak in this historic game, here in the Card's own stadium for their home fans.

(Black. Music up)

2nd Voice:

What a game! Unforgettable!

Voice:

For sure!

(Music up loud)

(Pause. Somewhat softer)

Voice:

...and now a word from our sponsors...

THE END