



The Fourth Wall

by Franca Rame and Dario Fo

Translated by Gillian Hanna

This is a scanned copy of the script for **Monstrous Regiment Theatre Company's** 1983 production of *The Fourth Wall*. The show was based on four monologues written by Franca Rame and Dario Fo, and translated for the company by Gillian Hanna: *I'm Ulrika - Screaming* (Italian production 1975), *Alice In Wonderland* (1977), *It Happened Tomorrow* (1977) and *The Whore In The Madhouse* (1977). They were complemented by onstage musical improvisations.

Full information about the show is provided in its **Productions** page on the company's website (www.monstrousregiment.co.uk). Copies of the typescripts from which these scans were made are held in the company's archive at the V&A's Theatre and Performance Archives.

These translations were published later, with only minor changes, in Franca Rame and Dario Fo's *A Woman Alone & Other Plays* (Bloomsbury Methuen Drama: London 1991), an extensive collection of their work edited and introduced by Stuart Hood, with an introduction outlining her approach to translation by Gillian Hanna.

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I'm Ulrike - Screaming

Christian name: Ulrike.

Surname: Meinhof.

Sex: Female.

Age: Forty one.

Yes, I'm married. Two children, born by Caesarian section.

Yes, separated from my husband.

Profession? Journalist.

Nationality? German.

I've been shut up here for four years. Four years in this modern prison in this modern state.

Crime? Attack on private property and the laws protecting the aforementioned property. Attack on the consequent rights of the owners of property to appropriate ownership of everything beyond all reasonable limits.

Ownership of everything. Including our brains. Thoughts. Words. Actions. Feelings. Work. And love. In other words: our entire lives.

That is why you who control this state machine have decided to eliminate me..

We are indeed all equal under your sacred law. All, that is, except those of us who happen to disagree with you. And you have raised women to the dizzy heights of liberation. Liberation? You have incarcerated me , a woman, in a man's prison.

Thank you. You have rewarded me with the toughest of your prisons. Antiseptic. Freezing. Like a mortuary. And you subject me to the most criminal of all tortures: sensory deprivation.

What an elegant expression to explain what you've done to me: buried me in a sepulchre of silence. White silence. White cell. White walls. White fittings. Everything's white. Even the door. The table. The chair. The bed. Not to speak of the lavatory.

The neon light is white. It's on all the time. Day and night. But which is day and which is night? How can I tell? Always the same light coming through the window. Faked natural light. White light, as artificial as the window. As unreal as the time you've stolen from me. You've painted time white.

Silence. Silence from outside. Not a single sound. Not a noise. Not one voice. You can't hear anyone walking in the corridor.. No doors opening or closing. Nothing.

Everything white and silent. Silence inside my skull. White as the ceiling. White like my voice if I try to speak. White the saliva clotting in the corner of my mouth. White and silence in my eyes, in my stomach, in my belly swollen with emptiness. I'm in an aquarium, floating in silence. Suspended like a tropical fish with no fins. I feel sick all the time. My brain's coming away from my skull; bobbing in slow motion in the watery light of this room.

My whole body is like dusty particles of detergent in this terrible washing machine called Stammhein. I'll collect them up, put the body together, put myself back together. No! No! I must resist. You WILL NOT succeed in driving me mad. I must think. Think! This is what I'm thinking: I'm thinking about YOU. You torturing me like this. I can see you, your noses squashed against the great glass walls of this aquarium you've got me floating in. You're watching me. Interested. You're waiting. Dissecting my living body. You're worried I might be able to resist. Worried others like me and my comrades might turn on you and try to spoil this beautiful world you've created for yourselves.

How grotesque. You deprive ME of all colour. Yet outside in that putrid grey world you've created, you're busy repainting everything in the most garish colours so that no-one notices what it's really like. You force people to consume things DYED all the colours of the rainbow. Who cares if the dyes are poisonous, carcinogenic? So what? You even paint your women like loony clowns.

And you shut me up in all this white so that ^{my} brain breaks up into fragments and smithereens, explodes like so much confetti. Spangles from your carnivals, your fun-fairs of terror. Oh yes. You make a great show of your certainties, but it's fear that makes you so cruel and so mad. That's why you have to have continuous din and racket. Coloured neon lights everywhere. Shop windows. The radio and the piped music in your big shops and chain stores. In your houses. In your cars. In the pub. Maybe even in bed when you're making love.

You are inflicting your own fear of silence on me. Because, yes, you're terrified of being left alone with your own thoughts. Because you're horrified at the thought that maybe, just maybe, this world of yours isn't the best of all possible worlds...but the worst... the most squalid.

And you've shut me up in this aquarium because..no I don't approve of the lives you lead. And no, I don't want to be one of your manufactured women, kept under cellophane wrapping. I don't want to be a little sweetie-pie, all giggles and inane charming smiles. I don't want to be taken out to dinner

on Saturday evening to some stupid posh restaurant - with such an interestingly exotic menu and such discreet idiotic background musak. I don't want to have to play-act sad-yet-appealing. Mad, capricious, foolish, little girl, frustrated, exploited, mother, whore. And then on cue, titter at some predictable rubbish you'll come out with.

Oh. A slight rustle. The door's opening. It's the wardress with my meal. She's looking through me as if I wasn't here. As if I was transparent. She says nothing. She has orders to say nothing. She puts the tray down and goes away. The door closes again. Silence once more.

Well now, what have you brought me to eat? Hamburger. Fruit juice. Cooked vegetables. An apple. Paper plate. Paper cup. No knife. No fork. Only a soft plastic spoon. It feels like rubber. They don't want it to pop into my head to kill myself. It's up to them to decide that. When the right moment comes they'll see to all that personally. They'll give the orders for me to kill myself. And because there are no convenient bars on the window to tie a twisted sheet to - or a belt - so I can hang myself - they'll give me a hand... or maybe more than just a hand...

A nice clean job. Clean as everything else in this social democracy. They're getting ready to kill me: in good order.

No-one will hear me scream or cry out. Everything accomplished in silence. With discretion, so's not to disturb the serene sleep of the happy citizens of this clean nation...so clean..and..well ordered!

But what of the ones who sweat and die far down below in the engine room of this ocean liner of yours? In noise, in din, in screaming Press....hammer....drill...boiler...gas....gas escaping. Christ it makes you cough. The conveyor belt...go with the rhythm, go with the rhythm, back with the rhythm.

Enough. That's enough. Turn off the machines! Silence! Silence! Silence is heavenly. Jailors - thank you for this gift of silence. This pleasure. I savour it...taste it....listen to it....delicious... refreshing..You'll never make me go mad. You'll have to kill me as I am - sane.

But I won't be the only one in this prison who commits supposed suicide.

No doubt about that.

All the members of my group will have to die.

I know that for certain.

You've decided. You up there in the government.

This slaughter will be carried out in a way that will make it clear to everyone what we're dealing with: summary police execution.

"STATE CLEAN UP"

It will be a massacre - as an example to everyone:

to impatient youth
to protesting workers
to back-biting, non-conformist intellectuals
to discontented, frustrated women

The tale of how each one of us was found in our own cell, hanged or dead from loss of blood or riddled with bullets. That tale will be a manifesto clearly nailed up for all eyes to see: the eyes of immigrant workers...Italians, Arabs, Turks, Spaniards, Greeks and even Germans.

A warning to beware of going on strike, of going on demonstrations, protesting, provoking disorder.

"Those who cause disorder are playing the terrorists' game,
Those who protest against the enforcement of unjust laws are
terrorists.

Those who protest and take to the streets shouting that they're
defending the quality of life.

Those screaming for clean air.

For respect - for the powerless - the old for a start - thrown out
like so much rubbish -

They're all terrorists."

Yes of course, we - in the Baader-Meinhof - fell into a trap of our own making. Perhaps the ideology of armed struggle isolated us even from ourselves.

But take care you 'Liberal Democrats'.

You are no better.

That fear they've sprayed all over you from the aerosol can marked

ULRIKE - PAGE FIVE.

"Achtung Terroristen" has frozen you. Every movement frozen. Every thought frozen. Every impetus towards decent behaviour.

The men who run this computerised system of ours have managed to swamp you in constant panic. So that one small mistake, a misunderstanding, a thoughtless piece of false evidence, and you could end up like me: SWALLOWED by this great crushing machine they call "Stammhein".

The state has uncovered the paralysing mirror of terror. And our own corpses are reflected in that mirror. One look at your own reflection and you're numbed; deep-frozen alive.

But:

Those of you who accept these conditions; who have darkness in your minds; who let your consciences fall asleep; who seek an existence without problems; a quiet life.....

I ask you:

"Are you sure you are still alive?"

Alice in Wonderless Land

Fly! Fly! Alice. But where are you flying to? Why are you flying? You're still falling down...tumbling...you're flying! Again! You're not a baby any more Alice. And you're still tumbling down holes! Huge deep holes that open up in front of your feet in the meadows. You should be ashamed of yourself. At your age! Still running after bunny rabbits. How old are you Alice? You're a woman now. You're not a little girl any more. You can't go stumbling along like this any more - not looking where you're putting your feet. When are you going to grow up Alice?

Al - i - i - i - ce! St - o - o - o - p! Aren't you ever going to stop flying? Tumbling down? Look at you, with your skirt up round your ears. Cover yourself up Alice. You're showing everything! You could at least change your knickers. Put clean ones on. And what about your socks? They're absolutely filthy. You should be ashamed of yourself. What on earth will people say? You little hussy! Stop!

"Who's that shouting? All I can hear is a lot of shouting. I can't stop. I just can't stop myself. Besides, I don't really care. Actually I rather like falling...it's great! The wind's stroking me. Lifting my skirt up - I like it - it's pulling at me. I like it! It's undressing me. I l - i - i - i - ke it! Oh yes...I'm sh - a - a - a - a - meless. I like it! Someone's hands trying to hold me back! Whose? It's my father's hand. I recognise it. So strong. Let go of me Daddy! My blouse is being oulled off! It's gone! Another hand. Two hands. They're kind. It's my mother. A smack. She smacked me. "A disgrace to your family!" she screamed at me. I'm tumbling. Another hand: my husband. Let go. Get off. My skirt! My skirt's being pulled off! It's gone! I' flying. I'm flying again. More hands: policeman. Judge. Teacher. Priest. They've pulled all my clothes off! I'm naked. I'm falling completely naked. The hole's getting smaller. It's like being inside someone. I'm sliding on a toboggan. I'm spinning. My head's spinning. My stomach. Oh God, I think Im going to be sick. I'm throwing up.....eugheughghgh..... now I' sitting on a chair. Bump! Crash! Who's this sitting opposite me? A rabbit in a top hat, drinking tea....I'm sick in his face. Oh dear. Terribly sorry...."

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"Not to worry. One must always take one's hat off in the presence of a naked lady. Hurray! Hip hip hurray! At long last - a naked woman....A liberated lady! Go on, my dear, throw up. Throw up as

much as you please. Do whatever you like with that delicious little mouth. But what are you doing with your hands? Covering yourself up? Don't tell me you're ashamed? Oh you're doing it to excite me. Yes, yes, those slender fingers with the little titties peeping through. And the others over the little tum tum. Ooh, I' getting all excited... It looks as though you're touching yourself. Oh yes. Go on. Go on. Touch yourself...Just a moment. Here are my guests: a piglet and a monkey. Please! Please! DO sit down. Make yourselves at home. Allow me to introduce you to Alice. She's an actress. She makes erotic films. Isn't she a delightful little creature? Alice, this monkey is a great avant-garde film director. Unemployed at the moment. Look! Oh look at him wanking!yes he's scratching his head. Well that's his way of wanking. He's an intellectual suffering from ontological insecurity. Hang on. Don't run off. Hey Alice! Stop!"

"Let go of me! Hands off piglet!"

"No, no. Do calm down. No-one wants to hurt you. No violence. We are opposed to all forms of violence. The director just wants to film you. He wants to make a film about liberation..It's the story of an extremely sensual young woman, positively burning with a love of life. She rejects all the repressive rules of society..It's a delicious little story of rebellion against all those patriarchal petty-bourgeois morals...this woman discovers her own body, her own identity. the pleasure of touching herself...caressing herself..enjoying herself. go on..touch yourself...stroke yourself..be quiet piglet, this is art. You and your corkscrew cock. Get behind the camera and start filming. As I was saying...this woman discovers herself...she's married to a real loud-mouth. A male chauvinist pig who slaps her around. And what does she do? She runs away. Just like you ran away. But there are others: craftier men, trying to ensnare her with insidious treacherous tactics...feigned gentleness. Persuasive words. They praise her and admire her. She's so fsacinating! They put you on a pedestal. Adorn you with beautiful garments - the better to undress you! They tell you about liberation and the dignity of women and then wham! They fuck you over!

Run Alice! Run away!...You're stumbling, falling into another hole... Fly off and then bump! Here you are among your sisters. Other women struggling for liberation like you. It's good. It's really good to be together, talking, arguing...but they're saying things you can't

always understand. They make you feel a bit inadequate....ah! You realise there's a boss here too. A woman who tells you what to do, what to think..she's after power too...They're not like that..One of them is very fond of you.She loves you. She really loves you. What are you doing Alice? You hadn't expected that? No, no. Homosexuality isn't wicked....no it's not a sin. Quite the opposite. It's beautiful - liberated....Running off? Where are you going? Oh dear, you're positively stuffed full of ridiculous prejudices...what a reactionary education you must have had....Alice stop. Don't run. Be careful, there's another hole; a huge gaping hole...you've fallen in, Alice! You're falling. Fly! Fly, Alice. It's lovely. It's lovely. The wind's twirling you. Your hair's flying. Watch out!

You're getting near the ground...a huge meadow...long grass...bump! What a gentle bump. You're still bouncing...rolling..What's this licking your face? A dog. Oh what a lovely dog! It's a sheep-dog. Hasn't he got lovely eyes? You stroke him. He wants to play. He's jumping up on you. He's rolling over to amuse you! He wants you to run with him. Run Alice! Go on! Run! Laugh! Shout! Oh what an adorable dog. You fall over. He's lying down beside you...isn't he affectionate? Alice, this doggie simply adores you. He's so sweet. He'd die for you. He'll look after you. Look at him...he's jumped up. He's growling at a man who wanted to take you away. He's sunk his teeth into the man. The man's escaped. He's run off! The dog comes back to you. He's licking your hands. Go on, make love with him. With the dog. The dog is the furthest shore. Love with a beast. With the beast lurking in all of us...we all have a beast inside us. Especially women. Go on, Alice. Don't hesitate. Behave yourself piglet...the dog's fucking, not you. You go and fuck the monkey. Intellectuals suffering from ontological insecurity are all the bloody same. Alice, what are you doing with that stick? Beating the dog? But he's man's best friend. You've smashed him on the head. You've murdered the dog! The erotic dog! ...And the trouble we had to train him! No. Hey, hang on. It's got nothing to do with us. Leave off will you. Put the stick down. No. No. Argh! Look, I'm just a poor bunny rabbit in a top hat. I'm an artist dammit! Calm down will you. Let's have a cup of tea. Let's be reasonable. ..No, don't break the camera...You're smashing it...not the monkey..Look if you want to relieve your feelings, fine. O.K. But not the camera...Stop it, Alice! Where are you going? That's the enchanted forest over there. Don't go in there Alice! No, it's the Cheshire Cat you can hear laughing in there.Laughing and vanishing....And the dragon's in there. And the knight in shining armour with his fiery sword - wait! Don't run."

"I will run you filthy beasts. So there.... I'd rather have the dragon than you all you monkey, rabbits and piggy perverts. Oh, what a beautiful forest! So many trees...stright...twisted...with branches like arms...Oh my God. A tree's taking me in its arms...lifting me up..very gently..Ah. Soft leaves...so moist..and such sweet-smelling flowers...Ah. Gentle rustling in the leafy branches..sounds like a love song...and the luscious fruit splitting open..the sweet delicious juice dribbling out..drink...drink. That's enough now, thank you. It makes me sick before meals..You can put me down now. No thank you. What are you doing? Oh how could you? A tree - panting..wheezing...gasping..moaning...OH NO!!!.....NO!! What do you think you're doing to me? Get your filthy branches off me. A tree with a penis. H- e - e - lp! Ah that's better. Someone coming to save me. It's the knight in shining armour. And he's got his fiery sword. Thwack! Wham! Splat! A branch off with every slash! Cut! Cut! Slash off its revolting thingy. It's going potty, trying to wriggle inside me. Aargh! A scream. Yuk! The shrunken castrated thing. All its branches lopped off. Oops, I've slipped down onto the meadow. Here's a mushroom sprouting up. Frisking round me.. on heat. Give it a kick. Wham! Got you! Ha, ha. It's leaping off, howling like a mad dog. What a world! You've all got sex on the brain - the lot of you.Even trees and mushrooms. Where's the knight got to? Vanished. And his beautiful prancing horse has vanished with him. That's a shame. I'd at least have liked to say thank you. Blissful silence. Peace. At long last. Golly, I'm hungry! Well there's always the fruit on those trees. No. Better not risk that again. What on earth is this? A fridge? A self-propelled fridge on wheels. Oh stop. Do stop, fridge. Thank you very much. Would you mind terribly if I looked inside you? May I open the door? Oh you've got everything.Cheese. Eggs. Milk. ..even meat! Oh golly, I'd LOVE a steak. But how could I fry it? Oh how wonderful! Here comes a kitchen..Cookers, and saucepans and frying pans. There's even a dishwasher and a washing machine. And a Hoover..No. Stop. What are you up to? Help! I'm surrounded. Stop pushing me. You're squashing me. O.K. Yes I will use you. But one at a time. N - o - o. You're suffocating me. Oh, where's the knight? Here he comes! That's better. Splat! Thwack! Shazam! They're all running away. All these electric gadgets vanishing..No. No. Don't smash the fridge. Wham! Too late! He's smashed it to smithereens: total disaster. Not a single egg saved. Knight! Hold on a minute! Wait! Hang on a minute! Aargh! Who's that laughing? Who is it? Oh ..yes of

course, dummy, it's the famous Cheshire Cat. He laughs and then he vanishes bit by bit. Tail first, then the eyes, then the paws, then the body. Till all that's left is the grin. Then the grin vanishes, and all that's left is....what's this thingummy? A cat's penis? Oh my God. No. It's impossible. It's becoming an obsession. Maybe I'm obsessed. It's me...it's my fault! I must be dreadfully sick. I'm obsessed with sex. And I imagine penises and couplings and violence everywhere. Calm down will you. I've got to calm down. Concentrate. Be sensible. Come on. Close the eyes, relax, breathe deeply. Let your thoughts go. Concentrate on the feet. Count the toes. One by one... up a bit...concentrate on the knees..up a bit...the pubes...skip the pubes...the stomach..concentrate on the stomach...the breasts..pause at the breasts..not too long..throat, mouth, ears. There we are. That's better. I feel much better. Relaxed. Now drop the head. Lift the head. Drop down over the toes. Aargh! Who's touching my bum? The knight. Could be worse. I thought it was a tree. Or a mushroom. Or a cat. Well, well. And what are your intentions knight? Honourable? Well, let's hope so. You'd like to take me in your arms. Alright. But be careful. All those plates of armour scratch my skin. Don't forget I've got nothing on. On horseback! How lovely to ride on horseback. Clap, clap, clap. Just like in the fairy stories. Where are you taking me? To your castle? You haven't got a castle? Well, what's that huge cement building over there that looks like a factory? It's a factory. Is it yours? What sort of a knight are you? An industrial baron! Well, what's your name? J.R.?

I hope you're not going to try and make me work in there. Look, I'm warning you, I haven't the slightest intention..I'll be being worked on. What do you mean, 'worked on'? What's this? A conveyor belt..No. No..I'm sliding off on a conveyor belt. I'm on an assembly line...aargh. Rollers under the back..jerking along...running..I'm slipping! What are all these workers round the conveyor belt up to? What are they doing to me? Get your hands off me! They're opening me up. They're taking me to bits! They're taking a load of stuff out of me. And putting other things in.

"Reconstruction!! Conversion!! Modernisation!!"

Oh I recognise this bit they've taken out.."Sense of Common Decency". They're replacing it with "Liberating Uninhibitedness". Oh that's nice. What're they taking out now? Oh yes. "Female Eunuch's Castration Complex"...otherwise known as "Deep Anxiety or Penis Envy". Oh yes. Get rid of that for God's sake. Thank you. Hey. What about putting

something else in instead ? "Maternal Pride" ? But I've already got that...do me a favour will you. What about "Uterine Self-Affirmation allied to Ovarian Self-Confidence"? Haven't got any? Sold out? What sort of a factory is this anyway? I bet it's government backed. Oh well. Let's make do with Sexual Self-Determination for want of anything better. Yes, yes. Out with the inferiority complex as well. That should have gone out with the harem. ...Oedipus complex...not that one? Why? Are you sure? But...O.K....Let's not have an argument. Hang on a minute, don't close me up again yet. You're not going to leave me without a Developed Sense of Self-Esteem and Self-Gratification? And what about Psychological Self-Sufficiency? Oh I see. It's all here in these three valves. Right. O.K. They get implanted in my brain. Watch that drill will you? God. What a headache. Finished? Golly that was quick. What? Oh, of course, automation. Now what are you up to? The packaging? What packaging? I'm not an object. Dear Christ, I'm a woman. I'm a conscious woman and I've got my dignity. You have to realise that I'm a woman and I'm proud of it now! Conscious! No. Not tights. Oh, God, no. I don't want to put them on. They chafe me. Anyway, they're unhygienic. They itch. They irritate my skin. Oh well, alright, as long as you put in some stick-on pany pads. They'll give me 'a new sense of freedom and movement'. Oh yes, firming cream... the light-control girdle..the famous up-lift bra...quick-acting hair removing cream...phpt! Twenty four hour deodorant.Slimming pills.. air freshener..the only completly successful anti-dandruff shampoo.. contraceptive pills..laxatives to clear the system out... hormone capsules to make your pee as white as the driven snow..transparent as dragon-fly wings...Losenges to give you that ring of confidence.. bust-developing cream..... shoes like gloves..with stiletto heels to lift the derriere..destroy your ovaries...false eyelashes..nail varnish..bright lipstick..rouge..eyeshadow..violet for the eyelids.. plaster for your corns..two drops of perfume..channel, flannel..rev-on, ave-on..come on...

There you are. Thank you, Madam, that's everything. You're beautiful. You're free. You're young. Modern. Adorable. Desirable. Antiseptic. Sterilized. Desexed."

What a carve-up.

It Happened Tomorrow

They stabbed me in the heart. Four times. It was as if they wanted to split it open. I couldn't scream when the knife first went in. All that came out of me was a noise, a rattle. They threw something in my face to stun me, maybe it was ether, but I did manage to see them. There were three of them, in military uniform. One of them grabbed me from behind. By the hair. He twisted my right arm behind my back and forced me to sit on the chair. The other one had my left arm. He shoved a knee into my groin - forced my legs apart - like a back-street abortion. The one holding my hair gave it a yank so my head was wrenched back. I saw the blade. One sharp thrust with the point of the knife straight into the chest, almost on my left breast and then a slash to the right and the left. The blade was out. A gush of blood soaking my stomach, my belly. Another thrust. A dull pain, but sharper than the first. This time I scream. As the knife is wrenched out, I feel the blade scraping against the ribs under the breast - a kind of screech. Another gush of blood, not straight away. Then more, pouring down, down, all over my belly. Down and down, drenching me between the legs. My stomach's heaving. Something's coming out of my mouth. Maybe blood. Maybe just water. I didn't feel the other two thrusts of the knife. I fainted for a moment.

"It's over". A dry voice woke me.

"Let her go". I slid down the chair. I felt myself falling, crashing onto the floor. My face pressed against the tiles. The blood still gushing out. Pumping out with every beat of my heart. My left arm is folded under my breasts. And I can feel the blood oozing out over it. Slowly. So slowly. It's streaming out onto the floor. I'm paralysed. Whatever it was they threw in my face to make me unconscious is working. ..or maybe I'm going...."It's over"....I say it too. "It's over"...A few more minutes and then it'll all be over. My eyes are wide open but I can't move them. All I can see is a channel in the tiles filling up with blood. Only out of one eye. The other eye is in darkness - pressed against the floor. I feel instinctively - and the feeling's getting stronger - that someone's watching me through the spy-hole in the door. The same instinct tells me to keep still. I try very slowly to move the fingers of my left hand. It's hidden under my breast - at the height of the breast-bone. Yes. I can move the fingers. I've hardly uncurled my fist when I feel my fingers

bathed in blood gushing out from between my ribs. I've found the open edges of a wound. It's a huge gash. I go on probing. Here's the spot where most blood is flowing from. With my index and middle fingers I squeeze it harder. The flow of blood slows down, but there's still a lot coming from other wounds a bit higher up, under the breast. The spy-hole is still open. I know because I can hear faint noises from the corridor. Noise of hurrying footsteps. Noise of locks clanging, doors slamming.

Shouts. Screams. Cursing. Shots.

"They're killing us all". Ensslin is in the cell next to me. I can hear her screaming. She sounds desperate. A voice giving orders:

"Two loops with the rope. Two! Now pull! Both of you! Pull! We'll hang her.....Tie the rope up there."

"Where up there? The bloody thing won't hold. Keeps slipping".

The one giving the orders swears.

"Fucking hell. They made these rooms too bare. Pass me that box. We'll make a nice hook. Yes that. Go on - take this hammer. Give it some stick".

The sound of muffled hammering. Then more orders:

"Hold her steady. Hold her legs. Come on, lift her up. Put the rope through the hook. Come on. Now. Tie it off. Tie it. That's got it. Let go. Right. We're off. The next one."

"Hold on. Untie the wrists first. Now get going. Out. Out!"

More footsteps. More keys jangling, locks clanging, shouts. Orders barked very loudly. Then a shot. Like a whiplash. The crash of a door being slammed.

At last a voice passing my cell remarks:

"It's four. We can give the alarm now."

"No. Wait!" Cuts in another voice.

"Let's wait another ten minutes. You can clear up. Clean everything up. Have a good look round before the judge and the doctor get here. Make sure nothing's left lying about."

"Open this one up. I want to have a look at Moller. You never know."

So here they are. My cell door opening again. The sounds, the voices, the words coming to me through cotton wool now, slowed down. Someone speaking from the threshold of the open door.

"Christ. This one's bled like a stuck pig. She's flooded the place out".

"No. Don't go in. You don't want to leave footmarks in the puddle do you? It's like walking in wet cement. You leave prints behind you."

"O.K. Well there's no point in going in anyway. You can see she hasn't got a drop left in her."

They close the door again. Footsteps. They reopen Ensslin's door.

"Is she dead?"

"Yes. Looks like it. What's this stuff? Look at this. On the floor."

A moment of silence. Then an order - screamed.

"Close it. Close everything and get out. We'd better give the alarm."

A series of footsteps. People running. Another silence. This time it lasts several minutes. There's no-one left in the corridor. I try to move my hand. It won't. I can't do it any more. I feel a numbness spreading through my whole body, beginning in the legs. I feel myself growing colder and colder as if I was in a refrigerated cell. The pain in my head is getting really bad - deep inside. I feel as if a sword's been driven into the nape of my neck. I can't breathe....I'm gasping.....I'm losing blood faster. In the corridor the alarm is ringing. Ten, twenty bells making a terrible row. I can hear people running - prison warders...they know where to go. They open the four cells. They hardly pause. Nothing said. A few minutes go by. Other people appear. Then stretchers. Two men come into my cell. I can hear them, but very far away. They pick me up. I can feel them swinging me. They feel my pulse.

"No I can't feel anything. The heart's perforated."

"Yes. This one's dead too."

A priest has come in.

"Where are you taking her?"

"To the mortuary. All four of them to the mortuary."

They carry me past the cells of the comrades they've spared. The doors are shut. The doors are completely sound-proofed. They can't have been aware of a thing. And even if they did know; even if at this moment they're screaming and throwing themselves against the doors, no-one could hear them. Silence everywhere.

I am dying. I can hear the voice of the stretcher bearer saying:
"Blood dripping all over the place. Stop a second. I'll stick some wadding in it."

I can feel them fumbling round in the wounds. They lift me up again. The trolley slides into the ambulance. I lose consciousness.

I wake up feeling my arm's on fire. Someone's stuck a needle into my wrist. He's injecting me with plasma. The fastest way into the vein. Nurse. Or maybe he's a young doctor. I've hardly opened my eyes when he says:

"You were nearly a goner there. They thought you were dead. They'd already dumped you in the mortuary. You'd lost so much blood your pulse wasn't beating any more. This is the second lot of plasma I've put into you. You would have bled to death on the marble slab if I hadn't noticed."

I try to give him a smile of gratitude. But I don't. I look round. No men in uniform. I breathe a sigh. At least I try. But something's stopping me. I feel as if there's a lump of stone on my chest. They really thought I was dead. This young doctor doesn't realise what a mess he's dropped the police in with his last minute resurrection. I manage a smile. But then I freeze.

"Maybe they'll manage to get me before I can talk. Maybe I'll never be able to talk. Or maybe I will. What a mess you've got into young man. What a mess!"

The Whore in the Madhouse: A Monologue.

A woman is sitting on a metal chair. She has earphones on - a microphone in front of her mouth. Wires attached to her ankles and wrists. They run into a machine - all wires and blinking lights.

"Yes. Yes, doctor, I can hear you. I can hear you fine. Don't worry. I am relaxed. It's just that I feel a bit like a robot..it's all these wires. Actually I feel like I'm sitting in an electric chair...it makes me feel..yes that's it...Listen doctor, wouldn't it be better if you came and sat over here by me instead of being stuck inside that space capsule thing? Because I can't talk to someone if I can't see their face..while I'm talking..it makes me feel like I'm in a rocket being shot to the moon! I'll tell you the truth just the same. I always do, whatever situation I'm in. You can't? You've got to stay over there and check the machine. O.K. O.K. If you can't you can't...Well, where do you want me to begin? From when we set fire to the industrialist's place? No? Prostitute? From when I became a prostitute? Listen doctor, I don't like saying that word - prostitute. I'd rather say 'whore' actually.I mean I think it's better to be straight, don't you? Alright. Yes. O.K. Yes. Yes I understand. My first sexual experience...the first..I can't remember. I remember the second..well I can't remember the first one because I was too small...my mother told me about it while she was having a row with my father and that's how I found out that he had tried to rape me...no, no trauma. I loved my father. The second one... the second..Well I've already told you all about that. Yes, with a boy in a field behind my house. The grass was soaking wet and my backside was really freezing. God he was green. He was thirteen and I was twelve...It was the first time for both of us..the first time we'd done..well, certain things. All we knew was that babies come out of the stomach. No nothing. I felt nothing. Oh yes. Now I remember I had a terrible pain in my belly button. Yes my belly button, because we thought that was where you made love.. and he kept pushing his thing into it..I told you he was green..gave me a swollen belly button..if he's only known...Yes of course I know what sexuality is... phph..Oh come on. doctor, I'm not as dumb as I look you know..As a matter of fact I'm rather well informed...I've read loads of books about sexuality. Scientific books no less. That's how I discovered that we have erogenous zones...that's what you call them isn't it doctor? Er-og-en-ous..Yes we have erogenous zones all over our bodies..It was a real revelation to me I can tell you doctor. I never realised that

The Whore in the Madhouse (2)

women have so many sensitive erogenous places..I found one book that had a diagram of a naked woman divided into four - just like those charts you see hung up in butchers' shops - a cow divided into joints..like a map of England with all the counties and towns marked out. And every area of this woman's body - in this book - was shown in a different colour depending on the greater or lesser sensitivity to the male - I mean when they touch us. For example, the loins, here you see, were all coloured red..that meant it was the most erotic zone. Then this bit here, behind the neck, was violet. You know - the bit they "best end" in the butchers'. Then this bit down the back - that would be the fillet - was all little orange dots. Then lower down, the bum - the rump. O the rump. Now that was really something..creme de la creme as they say..you could call that 'sirloin'. Now it seems that if you know how to go about it, the sirloin will really give you erotic shivers - drives you wild. Well now doctor, aren't I clever? I know everything there is to know about women's sexuality. Yes I know it all. Still. I'm a fool. Or worse. I'm an idiot. Got a bit missing you might say. I'm not just saying that doctor. It's just that I see the funny side of things. And you know, doctor, there are times when I can't understand anything that's going on..And then I do things. And afterwards I can't remember what I've done...Well I know about them because people tell me afterwards. O God. The things they tell me. But doctor, I've told you already. O that doesn't make any difference. I've got to tell you again. Of course. Because the machine's recording it. O bloody hell, I just felt a shock - here. Hey - you're not trying to roast me are you? Yes. Yes I'll go on. Well they tell me that when I went out of my head crazy I took all my clothes off and danced naked. They screwed me naked. You don't say that? Well what do you say? "Grabbed". Yes they grabbed me and then they screwed me. Yes, O.K. Let's go on.

Who? How many? Where?

I don't know. I don't remember. All I know is when I woke up here in the hospital, they'd stuffed me with sedatives and I slept for two days on the trot - and such bloody pain. It felt like I'd been given a good kicking. Too right I'd been given a good kicking. I was covered in bruises! Even on my face! How should I know? The police who picked me up say I'd had a fall. No, they couldn't find any witnesses. When the police arrived to take me to Casualty there was no-one about..well if there was anyone, they'd only just

Whore in the Madhouse (3)

arrived...or they were just passing by.

But who gives a toss about me anyway? I'm a whore, right? A whore who throws a wobbler every now and then. She goes barmy! Look I'm not giving you any sob stuff doctor. Come on, everyone says it: What is a whore? A woman who's found a way of getting along nicely without doing any work..

When I think how I worked..I was a maid and they fucked me! Then I worked in a factory and I was fucked there as well..bitch..you fuck too fast..anyone can tell you like it..slag..

No. No I don't like it. Yes I know, it's too simple..too easy to put all the blame on shitty blokes..society's a heap of crap..

Even my mother used to say to me: "If you want to be an honest woman, there's no other way. You've got to kill yourself first."

And I did kill myself...eight hours in the factory. And overtime on top...

Actually it was there I went out of my head. It was one of those weeks I was having the most terrible hot flushes..my head was spinning..but the forewoman said I was making it up. Said I was kicking up a fuss so's I could go on the sick. So just like that - I blew up. Smashed the windows with a trolley. Knocked over the drums of dye...and smeared myself all over with paint..and then they told me I began to dance naked in the corridors..the full stripper act..in the management offices..and all the clerks laughing and clapping their hands...swine..

No. No I don't know what was going on. Yes, after I left Casualty they brought me here, to the asylum. And when the asylum discharged me there was no more work...they'd discharged me too..the management Well you listen to me doctor. You can think what you like, but I'm telling you - I'm not a whore from choice. Look I've never met a single one who'd come rushing up to you and say "Oh it's great being a whore"..No. They all say "I'm going to make myself a bit of money out of this stinking job and then I'm going to retire. Buy myself a little shop. A tobacconists.. me and my bloke .."

If only it was true.. All the tobacconists in the country would be run by whores.

One of the doctors here - works in Ward Fifteen - you'd think she was just a young girl to look at her - I got friendly with her because I tell her everything and she writes it down...she explained to me that when I go out of my head it's because of my guilt complex. Because I can't live with the idea of being a whore.

I have a disorder. What the fuck is a disorder?

I don't understand much about this doctor, but I swear to you, they say I'm completely bonkers.

Well, I even enjoyed being in the factory. It was a rotten job. But I liked being with all the other women.

There was a terrible row all the time. Hot enough to send you giddy. And the solvents gave you a diabolical headache. The overseers were cows...

So what was it you enjoyed about it all then? Well I enjoyed it because I had self-respect. Look, doctor, do you know what I'm talking about? If you've never been a whore you can't have any idea what it's like to lose your self-respect. The filth of the job makes you feel that you're nothing but a 'thing' - a thing with a hole and legs. An arse, tits, a mouth and that's all. Nothing else. And if you happen to find yourself in the shit, what do you do? You try to swim and not to notice the stink. And you try to find someone to pull your boat for you. A pleasure cruise! And it almost feels like revenge...

"Want to screw, shitface? Who the hell do you think you are, just because you've got a couple of shillings to jingle? Come on, pay up. Screw and pay up. I'm not here. You can hump away on top of me but I'm not here. I'm pretending to be here, but I've gone off somewhere else. You're fucking a corpse you bastard."

Actually it's true. At those times I really have gone somewhere else... I go out of my head..and I'm shameless..and I start dancing with no clothes on..and then in the end you and your friends jump on me..five, six of you. You really have a go. Bastards. And all that deep hate you have for us, for women, comes pouring out of you. And now you feel like REAL men. Right bastards.

But I remember the right bastard who did me a favour the last time. He's a real big-shot. Company car. Huge office. Hundreds of secretaries. High up friends - all pigs just like him...I was pretending I wasn't there..and then as if by chance I found myself in the bar under his office at five thirty when they leave work. And he's as regular as clockwork. So I did my laughing girl act, the dumb broad, ready for a giggle, tarted up, a dab of perfume, fresh as a daisy. There were a lot of other blokes from his crowd trying to pull me, so he joined in and I let him win.

"The gentleman has won a fuck. Congratulations, sir!"

He was bursting with pride. Swept me out the bar winking at all the poor losers. We went upstairs to the office with the adjoining bedroom and he fell on me as if we were still down below with all his mates

slobbering round, shouting him on:

"Great stuff..what a man...what a bull.."

So he did his little number and then he fell asleep like a slaughtered ox.

I got dressed and nicked everything I could lay my hands on: cheque book, car keys, office keys, keys to the lift, his house, the garage, the motor boat, the safe..passport, driving licence..all his cards: Rotary Club, shooting club, American Express, Tory party card. The lot. Even the Queen's Award for Industry that he had hanging over the desk between the portraits of Maggie Thatcher and Princess Di. Then I went on my merry way and came here to the hospital.

I told them I felt one of my attacks coming on and I needed shelter... Oh I forgot to tell you, I left a little note on his desk before I left the office:

"If you want me I'm in the bin. In the Emergency Ward."

He phoned the porters' lodge, the right bastard, but there was a nurse there who knew what had happened and she said to him,

"Oh yes - you're the man who took advantage of a sick woman, are you?"

A lawyer came. But they threw the lawyer out. The bloke wanted to talk to me alone. But I said if he wanted to talk to me, he could come into the ward and do it in front of all the other patients. And when he came in, what a right little maggot he turned out to be underneath. ..we put him on trial ..

He had to spill the beans about everything him and his bastard friends had done to me ten days before. And he was shaking like a leaf..and stammering and blubbering...

"And now we're going to tell the papers. We've got the whole lot recorded on tape!"

So he had a fit..he went apoplectic. He looked like a pig strung up on a hook. So we gave him back his stuff and sent a transcription of the tape to the papers.

He got busy, desperately rushing round. He must have spent a packet. Christ knows where. But the result was that no-one published a line of this sordid little story.

Five days later I was going out the gate, on my way home, and I noticed this car following me..I started to run, but another car shot out when I got to the corner of the street, and they started to beat me up - they would have done me in, too, if a couple of the nurses hadn't noticed what was going on from the porters' lodge and come running. They took me to Emergency more dead than alive.

Whore in the Madhouse (6)

Then my comrades from the asylum carried me into the ward. They were all crying..not out of sympathy..out of fury...They were shouting:
"Jesus Christ. They despise us, they screw us and beat us, and we're supposed to put up with it. Well we'll get those bastards this time."

"It's pointless" the young doctor said. "Looking for revenge is pointless. You can only win by organised political struggle, not individual acts of revenge."

"Who said anything about revenge?" they said.

"What we have in mind is precisely that: A political action".

A fire broke out in the centre of town the day after. The posh building where that bastard's offices were went up in flames.

"Arson" they said on the T.V.

"Political action" said one of the inmates.

"Political action" repeated the others.

The young doctor was silent for quite a while. And then she said:

"Yes...a political action".