

FAKE PALINDROMES

BY SWAR THOUNAOJAM

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FAKE PALINDROMES: SEVEN PIECES OF THEATRE

- I. MAJESTIC
- II. DIVA.D
- III. IRIS
- IV. BHOPAL
- V. NEPAL
- VI. BARBARROSAPLATZ
- VII. HENRY J. BEANS

CHARACTERS

Tombi F
Mapa M
Mapi M

Time: Blank

Place: Blank

— indicates silence

/ indicates point of overlap in an overlapping dialogue

FAKE PALINDROMES premiered on 05 January 2011 at Ranga Shankara, Bangalore, with the following cast:

Tombi Spatica Ramanujam
Mapa Pratyush Singh
Mapi Sandeep Shikhar

Director Swar Thounaojam
Crew Anshul Pathak, Avinash K. Kuduvalli, Manjunath, Beary Mustafa and Vivek V.
 Narayan
Make up Ramakrishna Kannarpadi
Photography Virginia Rodrigues and Amit Bansal

I. MAJESTIC

Mapa Tsk tsk what way to die?

—

Mapi Stupid fucker. Those stupid roads become gutters in the rain. Fuckers went down the drain, no?

Mapa No, the firang—the firang—the firang / who—

Mapi I haven't heard such things

Mapa You don't read much, no?

Mapi What the / hell!

Mapa He did not have the capacity to balance. 5 feet barricade. Jumps. Falls on his face. Dies. Instantly.

Mapi Was he a fool? Jumping barricades. Where the hell did this happen?

Mapa Bus-stop.

Mapi Really? What an ass.

Mapa There was a foot-bridge. He could / have taken that.

Mapi What firang was he?

Mapa British

Mapi What British? English? Irish? Welsh? Scottish?

Mapa English

Mapi Must have been young, no? Must have thought all these people jump. I can also jump. (*pause*) What a way to die.

Mapa Must have been an idiot.

Mapi Instantly he dies?

Mapa Yes, instantly. On his face.

Mapi His face must have crashed, no?

Mapa Maybe – those barricades are those iron rods with arrow tips.

—

He might have lived, no? If one arrow tip caught a piece of his shirt, he might have lived.

Mapi Maybe.

Mapa Face must have crashed. Nose must have pushed in. Face crashed flat. No? Must have looked like those red gourds they smash at the gate. No? *(pause)* What festival do they smash these gourds?

Mapi No idea, man.

Mapa That early morning business festival.

Mapi No clue.

Mapa You are not listening to me.

Mapi Hmmmm

Mapa What did the police say?

Mapi No idea

Mapa Poor parents. Any idea how his family responded?

Mapi Uh huh

Mapa Sad fucker. To die like that. When did he die?

Mapi No idea. I don't read much.

Mapa It was in yesterday's paper.

—

What was his name?

Mapi How will I know? You read the papers.

Mapa I only remember he jumps, falls on his face and dies.

—

Damn. And nobody knows the passwords to his mail accounts.

Mapi What?

Mapa People might mail him, get no replies, get offended.

Mapi Offended? About / what?

Mapa His parents wouldn't know all his friends. It takes sometime – maybe never – for people on his mailing list to conclude he is dead. They mail him. They get no replies. They get offended.

—

Gmail and all these people should be more thoughtful. They should be like banks, you know that beneficiary option – in the event of death or accident, give particulars of person who can operate your mail account.

—

Well, what they can do – these Gmail and all these people – what they can do is allow a small access to a small part of the deceased's account. The family or spouse sends an email out. An email to all the people on the mailing list saying – my son has expired. my daughter has expired. my husband has expired. my wife has expired. my father has expired. my mother has expired. But not full access to the mail accounts – No No – Just a small access that allows the beneficiary to tell everybody that I have passed away.

Mapi Maybe his girlfriend has his passwords.

Mapa Maybe. But I don't like this idea of sharing passwords with my spouse.

Mapi Well, if you share your passwords with your spouse, then Gmail and all these people don't have to become like banks (*pause*) the way you suggested.

Mapa It is just an idea.

Mapi Hmm

Mapa It would be nice if they have that feature. If I die, my father can log in and send a message to all my contacts saying I have died. Or it can become something like an Out of office Autoreply. People mail and instantly it pops up umm this autoreply with let's say – Dear – Dear – Ok – No, Hello – Hello, My son has expired – what else will my father write?

Mapi No clue

—

Mapa But poor guy. To die like that.

Mapi Your father knows how to use the net?

Mapa No.

Mapi Your father doesn't know how to use the net?

Mapa Yes.

Mapi Hmm

Mapa I tried teaching him. He can't learn. He is too slow.

Mapi Obviously.

Mapa And he refuses to practice it. He confuses his passwords. He doesn't like the id I chose for him.

Mapi Hmmmm

Mapa He always calls up. I tell him to mail me. I tell him mailing me is much easier than calling me up.

Mapi So you have given up.

Mapa I will ask him to join a centre and learn from somebody else. Somebody else can be the teacher. The better teacher. He can learn better from somebody else.

Mapi This dead guy's father—what if he is also old and doesn't know how to use the net?

Mapa How is that possible? He is English. He should know. He won't be like my father.

Mapi You can't be that sure.

Mapa Of course I can be sure. The English father doesn't have load shedding. He doesn't have the excuse that my father carries for not using the net.

Mapi You still have power problems there?

Mapa In 24 hours they give 6. My father says he has better things to use the power for than check mails, read mails, write mails.

Mapi Understandable.

Mapa What understandable? These are people who wake up at midnight out there because the power comes at midnight. At midnight: they charge their cell phones; put clothes in the washing machines; run spices in the mixer; switch on the television to watch whatever is coming on the television; run the water pump; check their mails. My father refuses to be these kinds of people. My father is not practical. My father is difficult.

Mapi So what is your father doing when the power comes at midnight?

Mapa He is sleeping.

Mapi Obviously / understandable.

Mapa I really don't think you are listening to me.

Mapi I am listening to you and (*pause*) this is what I need to know: If your father is that difficult and can't use the net, why did you say that you want your father to be your mail account beneficiary? He won't / know what to do.

Mapa There is nobody else.

Mapi What?

Mapa There is nobody else.

Mapi How?

Mapa Because there is nobody else.

Mapi What about me?

Mapa You are a friend.

Mapi And what—I am your friend. (*pause*) I know how to use the net. In fact I spend more than 18 hours on the net and I don't have load shedding problem where I live.

Mapa You are a friend.

Mapi What do you exactly want to say?

—

Mapa Do you want to go to the bus-stop to see where this firang died?

Mapi No.

Mapa What a shame to die like that?

Mapi We can have a much healthier conversation.

Mapa You never listen properly.

Mapi Right

—

Mapa Why is it that you just want me to agree with you about everything?

—

I am telling you that I want my father to mail my contact list that I am dead whenever I am dead and you disagree.

Mapi I don't think I was disagreeing with you. I was telling you that your father can't do that because he won't know how to do it.

Mapa Obviously you did not listen when I was telling you that I will make him learn. Send him to a centre. / Get him a better teacher than me.

Mapi Why are we even having this conversation?

Mapa See, you don't want to listen. (*pause*) Do you know I have an idea for the two of us?

—

Mapi What idea is it?

Mapa Can you stand up?

Mapi Yes. Why?

Mapa If you can stand up, then stand up and make 5 feet? How tall are you?

Mapi Five something.

Mapa Ok, bend your knees a bit and make 5 feet.

Mapi doesn't move.

Mapa I said bend your knees a bit and make 5 feet.

Mapa lifts Mapi up, bends his knees, measure him for five feet and look at him.

Mapa You need to believe you are a five feet tall iron rod with an arrow tip. The rod is painted black and the arrow tip is yellow in colour. You have not been painted for quite some time and you are dusty.

Mapi is still.

Listen to me: You are a five feet tall iron rod with an arrow tip. The rod is painted black and the arrow tip is yellow in colour. You have not been painted for quite some time and you are dusty.

Mapi moves a little, much to Mapa's satisfaction.

Mapa I am the firang who dies.

Mapa walks around and stands quite a distance behind Mapi. He runs and tries to jump over Mapi. He fails.

Mapa How did he do it?

Mapi You have never jumped fences, no?

Mapa Not much. What's your point?

Mapi Normally you are supposed to hold on to the fence for support and tip over. What you are doing is high-jump and you are not trained for it.

Mapa So how do I do this now?

Mapi Can I show you?

Mapa Yes.

Mapi Listen to me: You are a five feet tall iron rod with an arrow tip. The rod is painted black and the arrow tip is yellow in colour. You have not been painted for quite some time and you are dusty.

Mapi shapes Mapa. Mapi walks around, stands behind Mapa, uses him for leverage, climbs him, jumps and falls face down to the ground.

Mapa And he dies. Just like this. From a five feet tall iron rod with an arrow tip.

Mapi is still on the ground. Face to the ground. Mapa walks around and sniffs him indifferently like a stray dog would. He lifts himself up, lights a cigarette and goes to sit in the wheelchair.

II. DIVA.D

Tombi We have to wait.

She rolls up Mapi in the sheet.

Mapi Wait for what?

Tombi Wait for his story.

Mapi Why?

Mapi Yes, why?

Tombi Because it is not fair.

Mapi Why is it not fair? He has a history and this / woman has

Tombi What history? I am the one who has worked with him. Like fifteen years or so. I have worked with him closely. He is a wonderful human being. Patient, understanding and brilliant. I never felt icky around him. He is very decent – he never let me feel –

Mapi That's because you are fat and ugly –

Tombi ...

Mapi You are not his type. Actually, you can't be any man's type.

Tombi ...

Mapi *(picks up a paper from the table)* Your patient, understanding and brilliant man found another patient, understanding and brilliant lawyer who called IT a consensual, flirtatious relationship that grew out of a close friendship with a colleague. The very decent lawyer also says he deeply regrets the hurt this has caused his wife.

—

Mapa My wife is too fat. I think she realizes my friendship was necessary

Tombi They met at work, had cubicles next to each other and at work, spent significant time in each other's cars. They played tennis together, went

to a flower show together, attended furniture exhibitions together, had beer in malls and so on and so forth and he came to think of her as his closest friend and confidante at work

Mapa I used to like it when she wore crisp white shirt tucked into her jeans on Fridays. A nice cleavage, sooper round denimed bum –

Tombi Their friendship became flirtatious and he suggested it should become a bit more romantic. He wrote her personal emails, called her at 11pm every night, and they exchanged gifts from time to time. She would gift him photo frames, mugs and chocolates. Photo frames, mugs and chocolates.

Mapa She had common sense. I could keep the photo frames and mugs in the office. No need of taking them home. Also, chocolates are always eaten right away, no? Strangely, my fat wife doesn't like chocolates. I wish she didn't like many things like the rice and chicken she eats plates after plates to end up looking like a big bowl

Tombi He would gift her books and music.

Mapa She – my consensual colleague - she didn't read much and her choice of music was too small-townish. I liked the idea of educating her a bit here and there. Some Stephen King here. A little Pink Floyd there.

Tombi After three years, they discussed the status of their relationship. He suggested that it be confined to business. For approximately six months their relationship was strictly professional. Then, she invited him to a tennis tournament, and their personal social friendship resumed.

Mapa I asked her to start wearing the white shirt tucked into her jeans on Fridays. Sooper she looked.

Tombi They kissed on two occasions.

Mapi Three. The first time – in the mall. After the beer. The second time – in the car. She was driving –

Mapa And I thought it was quite hot sitting there, watching her drive. The third time.

Tombi They kissed on two occasions. The first was in her room. However, contrary to her harassment claim, he did not bully his way into her room, nor did he force himself upon her.

Mapi She did not object when they kissed. After the kiss, she said she wanted to take a nap –

Mapa And I held her. Oh, it was heavenly to hold a thin woman with no belly. And it was much easier to push my package in.

Mapi After she woke up, she suggested they take a walk around her apartment before they each went to their respective houses. Two days later, they went to dinner at a restaurant. She danced, he watched.

Mapa She is very pretty, yes, I don't deny it but her arms are a bit flabby. When she whirled around to the music, her arms kinda jiggled.

Mapi After dinner and dance, he kissed her, this time in his car. The next morning they returned to office and upon arriving she asked him for a ride back home in the evening, which he provided.

Tombi She subsequently told him she had enjoyed their kisses at her place and in the car. She did nothing to convey to him that his attention was unwanted.

Mapi Following this last kiss in the car, he travelled to his hometown – a small town – to be with his grandmother in her final days. He is an orphan and his grandmother brought him up single-handedly.

Tombi While away, she sent him e-mail expressing her concern and extending “her best thoughts”. After attending to his grandmother’s funeral and affairs, he returned to the city. She welcomed him back warmly and baked him chocolate cookies.

Mapa She couldn’t cook like my wife but my wife couldn’t bake like her.

Mapi They repeatedly went on long car rides to see a big Hanuman statue getting sculpted just outside of the city. But following the death of his grandmother, he took stock of his life.

Mapa Yes.

Tombi He felt he could no longer continue his personal social relationship with her. He spoke with her and told her their relationship should be confined to business.

Mapa I just told her that we need to stop the long car rides. She would never offer to pay for the petrol. And she never leaves the clutch. It harms the car. And it was her idea – seeing that Hanuman statue.

Mapi Throughout her employment with the company she had the opportunity to complain of any alleged sexual harassment by anyone. The company provided an anonymous employee ‘help line’. Despite these resources available to her, it was not until several months after the car trips that she initiated a complaint of sexual harassment.

Mapa She went and found this HR girl I used to flirt with a bit here and there.

Tombi In the wake of media publicity of her claim, her counsel has issued a media statement regarding a former company employee. The media statement is that this new girl supports her claim.

Mapi She was his junior three years ago. He engaged in flirtatious banter with her for a short period of time. He did not engage in any conduct toward her that he knew or should have known was unwelcome.

Mapa She was a pretty little tight chick with big eyes and curly hair. Small. And she was one of the better dressed girls in the office.

Tombi She told him that the company’s human resources – HR – department had incorrectly understood an enquiry she had made about comments made by him. She said she wished to withdraw her enquiry against him. He told her that if she had any concern about his conduct it was proper for her to complain. He told her to think about it before deciding one way or the other. After thinking about it, she submitted a written note to

the HR department, with copies to him and the head of the corporate parent, stating that they had a personal misunderstanding which had been resolved. She indicated that she never intended to make a formal complaint, that she was withdrawing any such complaint, and that she wanted any mention of it expunged from his personal record.

Mapa I'd told her that she shouldn't wear this particular skirt she was wearing that stopped mid-calf because it made her look a little balloon-y. I didn't tell her the first time she wore it. Probably I was too distracted by this T-shirt she was wearing – you know the soft kind with a V-neck that nicely cups the breasts. Second time, she wore it – the skirt – I noticed it didn't suit her. It made her look pregnant and she was so young – like 23 or something. And at her age, she had a big ass.

Mapi She, at her request, worked with him for several more months before being promoted. She remained in that position for approximately a year before eventually leaving the company. After leaving the company she maintained contact with him.

Mapa Yes, she is on my Facebook and all.

Tombi She never indicated to him that she had any concern about his conduct toward her.

Mapa She's become much prettier now. Nicer eyebrows. The big nose is still there but her make-up is much better now, so actually her nose kinda looks sexy now. Every other week, she changes her profile picture – posing like a newbie model – maybe in two years, she might look as hot as she really wants to be – she is just starting out right now.

Yesterday she uploaded some 60 / 70 pictures – I spent like half an hour looking at all of them – I think she uploaded them yesterday. Very pretty she looks. And her dressing style has also changed. She dresses like a European now. You know – dresses, belts, the stuff.

I have been going through her old albums, like almost every night after work, and looking at her old pictures – you know she attending a friend's wedding, some Bombay pictures where they are all holding cocktail glasses, wearing lots of bangles – but I kinda got bored. I have seen them all. I wanted to see the new. You know – something new – and whoosh, yesterday a new album ting tong – beautiful. She got lots of comments. I didn't leave any but I will mail her – I think email will make her feel special than just leaving comments – telling her she looks extremely pretty. No double chins and everything – like my wife. I can't bear to look at my wife now. Thank god her face is not on my facebook. Imagine my old college friends looking at her ugly mugs and thinking to themselves – poor bastard has been had. Or even these women from office I have on my facebook looking at my wife's pics and thinking 'why did he marry this git?'

Mapi He is happily married. He deeply regrets the trouble that has been visited on his wife in recent days. He apologizes to her.

Mapa Yes, I did apologise to her. I don't know why but I did say Sorry many times. I was saying 'Sorry, darling. I have hurt you so much. You are my wife. You are the woman I have married. Not them'. And I was thinking to myself: Why the hell am I saying Sorry to her? She should be the one apologizing to me. It is criminal that I have to live with her. Watch her fat ass and cellulite thighs come out of the bathroom. When we are

watching TV, I get obsessed just watching how ugly and fat she is. Her forehead wrinkles and shines because she hasn't washed her face after coming back and even after cooking, she hasn't bothered to wipe the oil off her face. She always watches TV with her chin pressed to her throat and that makes her double chin triple and it is horrendous – she almost looks like a man – she hasn't threaded her upper lip for a month or so. She is wearing this nice little cotton dress with spaghetti straps and she looks like a weightlifter. I've always wanted her to dress nicely when we go out but now, I am slowly changing my mind. She will look like a mindfuck mini rhino if she ever wears one of those nice tops or dresses that these nice girls wear these days. And she has a belly. How can a man fuck a woman with a belly?

We go for our weekend shopping, she sits in the front. I am driving. She is still my wife, I have to go with her for buying the fruits, bread, vegetables, milk, fish, chicken, mutton – and every time, yes every time I wish the woman sitting next to me in the car, my wife, looked like one of my facebook women... Thin, pretty, smiling – those women who make me feel warm, make me feel worthy.

All kinds of ugly bastards – balding fucking bastards with bellies have these wives and girlfriends who just – who – I can't keep my eyes off these women – these thin, pretty, smiling women. I try to be near them as long as possible. If they are looking at garlic, I also stand and touch the potatoes kept next to the garlic rack. And I imagine – imagine having someone like her to go shopping with... my life would be much brighter – my life would be much brighter with a woman like that – and much lighter it would be – my life would be much lighter – I want a certain kinda grace in my life and a mini rhino of a wife who eats too much

chicken can't give that grace – I cannot imagine that the bright light
grace I yearn for can come from anybody but a woman who is soft and
slim, clean face, healthy hair, nice nails and soft feet and no belly.
Women with bellies have no grace and I need grace in my life.

III. IRIS

Tombi Leave the chairs.

Mapa puts the chairs down. He is about to wheel away the table.

Tombi Arrange them properly.

Mapa ...

Tombi Let them face each other. Ten centimetres apart.

Mapa performs the action.

Mapa ...

Tombi Make it a few metres.

Mapa ...

Tombi One and a half metres.

Mapa performs the action.

Tombi Good. Leave.

Mapa wheels the table away.

Tombi Why is that table making such a noise?

Mapa wheels back the table to Tombi and leaves it beside her.

Tombi Come in.

Mapi enters.

Tombi Sit.

Mapi ...

Tombi Sit, no? Nobody has touched that chair. Sit.

Tombi goes to the indicated chair and knocks it on the floor twice. Mapi reaches and sits.

Tombi So they made you touch your fingers on a pad? And they asked you to press your ten fingers?

Mapi nods.

Tombi Scum. Low life. Dirty. You don't need to touch anything here. Nothing has been touched by a stranger. I am going to sit here – in this chair – one and a half metres away from you and look at you – at your eyes actually. No touching. Nothing intimate. I will just look closely into your eyes from this chair.

Mapi nods.

I don't even need your face. I just need your eyeballs. OK?

Mapi nods.

Actually I do need your face. I need you to cooperate by holding your head still. Can you do that?

Mapi nods.

Stop doing that. I asked you to cooperate by holding your head still.

Mapi ...

Tombi Show me your fingers.

Mapi shows fingers.

- A. Tcach! Never. I mean, look at your fingers. Tcach!
- B. Your eyes are in a much better shape than your fingers. You don't read much, no?
- C. What's your eye colour?

Mapi ...

Tombi I asked: What's your eye colour?

Mapi Black, I think.

Tombi Black, you think.

Mapi ...

Tombi You don't think it can be brown?

Mapi I've never looked at my eyes closely.

Tombi Well, I am looking at your eyes closely and I am telling you they are brown.

Mapi Yes, brown can be nice.

Tombi This is quite a rude exercise. Staring into people's eyes.

Mapi Brown can be nice. Softer than black. Yes, I like brown. (*pause*) You have a round face.

Tombi Many people say so.

Mapi That ring you are wearing –

Tombi Please look straight. Don't look away from me.

Mapi Sorry. You are wearing a ring, no? The kind many villain women wear – you know, like Sudha, on TV? I think you are of the right age to wear such rings. I can't wear them. People will think I am trying to be fancy or something like that.

Tombi Lights.

Mapi (*giggles*) I didn't know it was make-up. I thought you were pretty. You smelled like you were a pretty woman.

Tombi Please focus your eyes – yes, that's correct. Head still. Your irises are more useful to us than your fingerprints.

Mapi They said it is expensive.

Tombi Who said what was expensive?

Mapi The newspaper said this eye thing is expensive and we should stick to the fingerprints one and the full face thing.

Tombi Newspapers don't know shit.

Mapi Yes, someone said newspapers don't know that it is impossible to take fingerprints of manual workers and children.

Tombi Keep your head still. Once we have your iris, we don't need your fingerprints, your face, nothing more. Actually, we don't need you here. We have enough of our own. Keep your head still. Look straight into my eyes and don't blink.

Mapi How do my eyes look?

Tombi Normal.

Mapi (*giggles*) Iris means rainbow. In Greek. I read that. So I have a brown rainbow.

Tombi Yes. Many people from your country have brown rainbows inside their eyes. You are the 52nd from your rainbow country.

Mapi I can't come back now.

Tombi No.

Mapi I have to go back. And eat rice and salt.

Tombi If that is what your country gives you.

Mapi Rice and Salt. Salt and rice. Rice rice. Salt salt. No rice. No salt. (*pause*)
My eyes are the problem, no?

Tombi Yes. Correct.

Mapi And they are spending so much of money on this eye thing to stop us. To stop us from coming here.

Tombi Yes. We – They will look deep into your eyes, catch you and send you back.

Mapi They will look deep into my eyes, catch me and not kill me?

Tombi No, killing is wrong. They will send you back.

Mapi So I shouldn't have eyes if I want to come back?

Tombi nods.

Should I try taking my eyes out? I really don't want to end my life with just rice and salt. You see, it is no fun – you have not been to my country, no?

Tombi We are done. You can leave now.

Mapi Should I try taking my eyes out? I really don't want to end my life with just rice and salt / out there.

Tombi I heard you people have a nice beach out there.

Mapi But I can't see the beach. And you have never been to my country? We don't have birds there. *(pause)* Why are you this awfully nice lady telling

me killing is wrong? *(pause)* Should I try taking my eyes out? Tell me:
Should I try taking my eyes out? Should I try taking my eyes out?!

Tombi *(to offstage)* Stick!

Mapa enters with a white cane and gives it to Tombi. Mapi doesn't get up. Tombi and Mapa watch Mapi for as long as possible.

Mapi Please: Take my brown eyes out.

Tombi Here: The stick. It is yours now.

Mapi I can't see the beach.

Tombi I heard it is a nice one – your beach.

Mapa carries Mapi downstage.

Mapi *(to Tombi)* Hey. Hey. You. I am talking to you. Take my damn eyes out. I can't see that beach. I don't like rice and salt. I will hear nothing there. We don't even have birds out there. *(pause)* Bitch. If you think the beach is nice there, you all go and live there, no? Make it better. Birds. Flowers. Water. Everything. And then I will come.

—

(to Mapa) Hey, listen. What's your name? You like beach? We have a nice beach there. You want to go? You can build a house – a nice white

house with a long verandah where you can make a dog sit when the sun shines.

—

(*to audience*) And we have these plants – you pluck a few leaves and crush them between your palms and – and nothing happens.

IV. BHOPAL

Tombi drags in a chair with a bell in hand.

Tombi *(without looking up)* Let's start.

Nobody enters. Tombi doesn't look up. Waits. Rings the bell. Mapa enters, takes position downstage and smiles.

Tombi And your father will bring the microphone?

Mapa runs to get a standing microphone and returns.

Tombi Should we wait for your mother to tell / you to start?

Mapa

First they put a garage over you. Then a plot of chives and shallots. Now, a tea stall. And this bench. On which I am sitting. And underneath this bench is you: 14 months old and gone for 16 years. Your mother cried and cried: stories about how she gave you more love, in fact, loved you more than your brother. It's good you and your brother were such unthinking children; and that you died. You were too young to know you had a big head. So let me tell you - you had a gigantic head and never cried.

First, people said you were a good-natured child. Then you became too odd – how can a child never cry? You were shown to doctors. The doctors showed us that you were wrong somewhere. They were about to fix you properly when you just left (*pause*) I sweat whenever I have tea (*chuckles*).

I think of you often – wishing you were my real brother. Wishing you were my real brother so that people can say to each other: His small brother died with a big head. That's why he is so sad all the time. A brother's death could have validated my grief. I could have rigged people to explain my unsound grief with your tragic death.

My almost brother, my constant twin. Our religion of love is idiosyncratic. Now here, where I am beating my heels – can you hear it? – here, right here is where the spade struck first to bury you (*pause*) I forgot to carry that water bottle (*sighs*)

If you had lived, like me, we could have saved each other over beer. Grown bellies. We could have affectionately agreed with each other that we are sick. Sick of people cleaning their pipes with water. Sick of those

bum tanks farting out gas. Sick of coughing, vomiting, suffocating. Sick of going blind. Sick of me. Sick of methyl. Sick of isolation. Sick of isocyanate. That's how we can begin our day together: Sick of elephants
(*pause*) Apologies.

Everything is normal. Immediate action is to finish this tea. And go get the water bottle.

Tombi

They'd put a garage over the boy. Then a patch of potatoes and onions. Now a tea stall stands over the boy. And a man sits on a bench outside the tea stall everyday and talks to himself. People say he is 17 years and two months old. And his mother sends him everyday to this bench in the tea stall so that she can get some work done. You know – make food, clean the house, wash clothes, embroider pillow cases – no, they don't have a maid and his mother embroider pillow cases to feed the two of them. Feed the two of them – damn, doesn't this phrase sounds as if I am talking about cats? The mother doesn't love him.

The mother doesn't love her son. He is too young to know he has a big head. So let me tell you – he has a gigantic head and he never talks. First people said: Oh, he is a shy boy. Then he became too odd for these same people who said he was a shy boy. How can a young man never speak? He was shown to doctors. The doctors showed that there was something wrong with him. They were about to fix him properly when I found him talking to himself. I told the same people who made an odd boy out of this shy boy this: See. This is an improvement. He is talking to himself.

My almost brother, my constant twin. Our religion of love is idiosyncratic. Now here, where I am beating my heels – can you hear it? – here, right here is where I stand to watch you talk to yourself. If you speak to me, we can save each other over beer. Grow bellies. We can affectionately agree with each other that we are sick. Sick of people cleaning their pipes with water. Sick of those bum tanks farting out gas. Sick of coughing, vomiting, suffocating. Sick of going blind. Sick of me. Sick of methyl. Sick of isolation. Sick of isocyanate. That’s how we can begin our day together: Sick of elephants (*pause*) Apologies. Everything is normal. Here, I got you the water bottle.

Mapa doesn't move, and stares at the audience.

Mapi Oye! Can you please move your ass? Hello? Sir? Move. Areh. What’s wrong with these people? (*to Tombi*) Hello, Madam. You know these two jokers, no? Tell them to move please. God knows why they land up here.

He goes to Tombi and rings her bell. Tombi has been busy reading a paper for the whole time. Mapi snatches the paper from Tombi and goes to Mapa.

See, I put an announcement in the paper – I have announced that my tea stall is closing today. Please read. (*to Mapa*) And you? You are young. Yes, slightly smaller than normal and yes, your head is a little too big. But you are young. Why do you want to come here everyday and waste your time, eh? You should have better things to do. How old are you, huh? Tell me your age? How old is he? (*to Tombi*) Madam, how old is he? What do you think his age can be, huh?

Tombi 17

Mapi 17. When I was 17, I was already running a successful garage. On my own. It was one of those right time right place thing. People started leaving this town. Not gradually. Not slowly. But suddenly. Like rats they all ran away. I was one of the few old cats who stayed behind.

These people who left – they were the rich ones. The poor ones have nowhere to go. They stay put and die – nothing new there – it is a universal ummm universal (*pause*) pattern. Sorry if I sound like a tailor and all with this universal pattern thing. Now these rich people were not running away. I am sorry I called them rats. They were rich people who were not running away but leaving, yes leaving to come back later, you know when the time is right when the place is right thing. When they left, they had to leave their cars behind. They were not unhappy to leave their cars behind. They knew they would be coming back.

All they needed was a man who could look after their cars for a few months, even though it's been a few years now – sorry I got a bit distracted there – hmmm a man who could look after their cars for a few months from rain, sun, cloud, birds and gas. I decided to become the man.

This land was my mother's which my father took from her and now it's been mine for quite some time. This land was big and empty when these rich people were leaving. When I sensed their helplessness – you know nowhere nobody to leave their cars with – I went to them and suggested politely about a kind of a garage and brought them the evening before they left to see my big, empty land. They were happy – relieved at last to

see a big, empty land and a young, strong man to leave their cars with. So they gave me money to build four walls, a few windows for ventilation and a big gate and of course, the roofs – there I got my garage. At 17, I was running a big garage with 52 expensive cars under my care.

Few months, nothing happened. I was happy nothing happened. The after a few months, things happened: all the cars became black. All the nice red, green, yellow, white cars became pot black. Then they stank. Stank as if they were farting out gas like those bum tanks. I got really angry: How dare these rich people leave their black, stinking cars with me and destroy my big, empty land? I drove all their black, stinking cars into the lake and wrote angry letters to their rich owners that whenever they come back, they can go diving into the lake and fish out their black, stinking cars. I razed the garage to the ground.

And then, I wanted a field: A field of blue flowers that don't smell but look heart-stoppingly beautiful. So I dug up the ground and planted rows and rows of heart-stoppingly beautiful blue flowers that looked as clear as ice in the sun. But the money given by the rich people was swiftly disappearing and because I had driven their black, stinking cars into the lake, they were not sending me any.

Actually, they did not reply to my letters. I wrote to them that their cars were at the bottom of a lake and they didn't even bother to reply. Nothing. So I didn't bother to enquire after them. They can look after themselves. *(pause)*

Those blue flowers were heart-stoppingly beautiful but they were not earning me any money. (*pause*) I started seeing some new faces around here: They came – different people who didn't look from around here – with cameras. And sometimes I would hear them mutter to each other: Some tea would be good. Some tea would be really nice.

My mother, when she died, had left some pots and pans which I never sold away. So I put four poles in the middle of my big, empty land – yes, I got rid of the rows and rows of blue flowers – what a job it was but I had to get rid of them. They were doing nothing for me – and over the four poles, I strung a tarpaulin sheet and started a tea stall.

Loud people with strange faces came and drank my tea. I could have told you why they came to my town but I couldn't understand the language they were speaking in. Except for – yes, it was quite strange: I understood them when they were muttering to each other – Some tea would be good. Some tea would be really nice. Strange. They would only say TEA to me and I would give them tea. But suddenly they stopped coming. I waited for them but how long can you wait, huh? How long can you wait for loud people with strange faces whose language you couldn't understand, huh?

Then out of nowhere, this boy started coming to my shop. Started sitting on this bench everyday. Poor chap. I give him tea but I can't keep this shop open only for him. I am closing it down today. I am going to become a tailor now.

The rich people have started writing to me – not angry letters but beautiful letters of how they miss this town and how they are going to come back and live here. And they have sent me some photos – they are

wearing such nice clothes in their photos – wait, I will show you: Here. Don't they look beautiful?

Three days ago, while I was looking at their photos again, I had a thought:

When they come back home, they will need nice clothes. And I don't know of any place in this town that makes and sells nice clothes. So I am leaving tomorrow – to learn to make nice clothes and I will come back in a few months and open a tailor shop right here, where I am beating my heels – can you hear it? – here, right here is where my tailor shop will stand with nice clothes hanging behind glass walls.

Everything will be normal.

Mapi rings the bell continuously: Tombi picks up her chair and exits; Mapa gently leads Mapi offstage.

V. NEPAL

Tombi So somewhere ummm yeah, here is Nepal.

Mapi It is near Tibet.

Mapa It is near Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Sikkim.

Tombi Sanghiya Loktantrik Ganatantra Nepal. Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. Nepal – the pala protected by Ne. Nepalis are descendants of migrants from parts of earlier Greater Nepal, Tibet, India and parts of Burma and Yunnan along with native tribal population.

Mapi Tibet, Burma, Yunnan, native tribal population. I mean why?

Tombi Derived from Sanskrit, Nepali is considered the language closest to Sanskrit and is written in Devnagari script –

Mapa But we can call them chinkies, no?

Mapi I suppose you can.

Mapa So bas, settled. Chinkies.

Mapi How do you spell that? C-H-I-N-K-I-E-S?

Mapa Yes, but when you say it you put a G in your mind after C-H-I-N so that it is not just CHIN but actually CHING you know like saying MONKEY –

Mapi So it is CHIN-G-KIES?

Mapa I think so.

Tombi Funny.

Mapa Who is funny?

Tombi Nothing.

Mapa Tell, no? What do you find funny?

Tombi Nothing I said.

Mapa Fine. (*pause*) You are funny.

Mapi / Seriously, you two. Stop it.

Tombi (*to Mapa*) Whatever.

Mapa You have a habit of talking to yourself / especially when you are driving.

Tombi Whatever, dude. You want to fantasise I talk to myself, then please do fantasise. While you are at it, maybe you can also add that I dance whenever I talk to myself?

Mapa No. You smell.

Tombi What did you say?

Mapa Nothing.

Tombi Did you say I smell –

Mapa Nothing I said.

Tombi Fine. (*pause*) You are funny.

Mapi / Seriously, you two. Stop it.

Mapa (*to Tombi*) Whatever, chinki.

—

Mapi Chin-G Chin-G kies.
Chin-G Chin-G kies –

Mapa I see you in the street.
In your straight straight hair
And your slit slit eyes

Mapi Chin-G Chin-G kies
Chin-G Chin-G kies –

Mapi hands Mapa a horn.

Mapa I honk once twice thrice.
In a really really nice way.

Tombi He honks once twice thrice. I look straight into the sun.

Mapa Head still, rice eyes straight.

Mapi Head still, rice eyes straight.
She looks straight straight into the

Mapa Traffic signal

Mapi Chin-G Chin-G kies

Mapa Look at me! (*he presses the horn*)

Mapi Chin-G Chin-G kies

Mapa Look at me! (*he presses the horn*)

Mapi Chin-G Chin-G kies. Look at me! (*he presses the horn*)

Mapa/Mapi We: A road. In a car. Waiting for the green signal. She, this girl: On the Road. In a skirt. Waiting for – hey, look at me. We: A road. In a car. Waiting for the green signal. She, this girl: On the Road. In a skirt. Waiting for – hey, look at me. We: A road. In a car. Waiting for the green signal. She, this girl: On the Road. In a skirt. Waiting for – hey, look at me. Chin-G Chin-G Chinkies. Chin-G Chin-G Chinkies. Chin-G Chin-G Chinkies.

VI. BARBARROSLATZ

Mapa What was the first song?

Mapi Where?

Mapa There. We saw you. In the first row.

Mapi is nonplussed.

Tombi My dikhra means the concert.

Mapi Dikhra?

Tombi My son.

Mapi Oh. Oh. Sorry. I just didn't realize.

Mapa So what was the first song?

Mapi Ummm. Shit. I can't remember what was the –

Mapa Yeah. You were busy with your camera.

Mapi Sorry?

Mapa I said you were busy clicking his pictures instead of listening to him.

Mapi I was recording him.

Mapa Same thing.

Tombi Did he sing Measuring Cups?

Mapi No, he didn't.

Mapa So you know his music at least.

Mapi I travelled all the way to listen to him.

Mapa But I saw that you were very busy with your camera.

Mapi I was still listening to him.

Mapa Why did you bring your camera if you travelled all the way to listen to him?

Tombi We also came all the way / from

Mapa Without a camera, of course.

Tombi How did you first hear of him?

Mapa and Tombi keep watching him till Mapi clears his throat and speaks.

Mapi Ummm. Yeah. I am kinda tone deaf. But I was getting tired of just reading and reading. I read to stop thinking. I am not really a music person. I hardly play music – actually it hardly enters my mind that I can listen to music. But one day yeah one day I just felt like listening to some new stuff. Ummm I really don't know why. It just struck me that I could listen to some music. Many people do that, no? So I googled and found this guy's site who keeps updating his stuff quite frequently. And I found HIM. It was actually his name that struck me – I thought he made his name up – yeah seriously I thought he was some teenager who made his name up and started singing / random songs.

Tombi He is a classically trained violinist.

Mapi I didn't think much of him at that time. I was only like – yeah – what a weird name. Then some six months later, I was searching for some new music to play at a friend's party. And I found his stuff lying on my laptop. I put him on and Jesus Christ – was I sucked in or what?

Tombi Which one was it?

Mapi Nervous Tic Motion –

Mapa Of The Head to the Left.

Tombi They say his brother is autistic and that's how he got that song title.

—

Mapi Ummm and you guys? How? When?

Tombi I read an article on him in the paper. He didn't make his name up. It is a real name. Then one day, after reading that article, I was in the music store and saw this lovely album cover. When I picked it up, I saw his name again. I bought it. Played it. Nothing happened. I forgot him – the same way you forgot him. For a few months.

But one morning it rained and I was looking for something to listen to while I cooked. And just by chance, I put him on.

Tombi smiles to herself.

It was Measuring Cups – get out your measuring cups and we'll play a new game come to the front of the class and we'll measure your brain we'll give you a complex, and we'll give it a name –

Mapa My mother started playing that song every morning –

Tombi when you talk about the hand of glory
a tale that's rather grim and gory
is it just another children's story that's been de-clawed?
when the tales of brothers Grimm and Gorey have been outlawed

Mapa I started liking him too. I bought more of his music.

Tombi i think they're gonna make you start over
you don't wanna start over
put your backpack on your shoulder
be the good little soldier
take your places now, cause we're all predisposed

Mapi Your mother was listening to him every morning and you got hooked to
him because of it? Oh. I thought it would be other way round.

Tombi so put your backpack on your shoulder
be the good little soldier
it's no different when you're older
you're predisposed
that's all for questions
now, the case is closed

Mapi measuring cups, play a new game
front of the class, measure your brain
give you a complex and we'll give it a name

Mapa The song ends at: now, the case is closed. Why you humming that fifth
verse –

Mapi Oh, I just felt like it.

Tombi So, are you staying somewhere?

Mapi Oh no. No. I am returning tonight.

Tombi When?

Mapi It is the 2:30 train.

Mapa That's morning. Not tonight.

Tombi It is 10:15 pm now.

Mapi Oh, It is ok. I will wait at the station.

Tombi Oh just be careful. It is not an airport. And some of the shops will close.

Mapa Did you talk to him?

Mapi Who? Oh Yeah. Yeah I did. But I had to wait for a long time to see him. He took a long time coming out.

Tombi I have read that he is quite shy.

Mapa I asked him why he was not performing in our city. He said he wanted too but things didn't work out. I told him we came all the way to listen to him. And I got his song list. Handwritten song list.

Mapi Show.

Mapa takes out an A4 sheet from his back pocket and gives it to him.

Mapi His handwriting is like a teenager's. It is so cute. Where did you find it?

Mapa It was lying at his guitarist's feet. I kept an eye on it. Then I noticed that another girl was also eyeing it. I am good at picking these things up in a crowd. So I told my mother to keep an eye on the girl.

Tombi Which I did. She had both her parents on either side. We needed to be quick.

Mapi So you were eyeing his song list instead of listening to him.

Mapa I was also listening to him.

Tombi And when he played that Dr. Stringz, we knew he would soon wrap up his gig for the night.

Mapa I could sense that the girl and her parents also knew the gig was coming to an end soon. I could see them watching the guitarist's feet. And I told my mother: see, she's got blood in her eyes.

And I said: Shoot her eyes then. It was a moment of inspiration.

I gave my mother the small torch I usually carry in my back pocket. To shine it into her eyes and if need be into her parents eyes too.

Mapi Shit. That's crazy.

Mapa As soon as he said Gute Nacht, Auf Wiedersehen, everyone was insanely clapping and screaming. I just leaped. It was quite easy. I didn't even need to rush. I calmly went to the guitarist. I smiled at him. He waved his butter knife at me – yeah, he was not using a pick, he was using a butter knife. How insane is that. So I smiled coolly at him – I must have looked like this cool cat – picked up the song list, folded it into four, put it into my back pocket and gave the guitarist a peace sign. He smiled again with his butter knife.

Tombi And I didn't even need to shoot her eyes because she was busy screaming I love you at him. And her parents were watching her proudly, like she's won some gold medal or something.

Mapa But I watched them slowly coming to their senses. She remembered that she was eyeing that handwritten song list. She ran to the guitarist spot – and Jesus fucking Christ – her face was froth. She turned to her parents and yelled.

Tombi (*imitating the Girl*) I asked you to keep an eye on it. Now it's not there. Now I will never have it. How could you?

Mapa It was hilarious. She sat there and cried.

Mapi Why? Why'd you do that?
You shouldn't have done that
If I told you once, I told you three times

You'll get your punishment / when you
Show me your crimes

Tombi Ah! Genius. He is a genius.

Mapi tears the A4 sheet into pieces while singing the song. Mapa throws him to the ground and thrashes him. Tombi pulls his backpack off him, opens it, empties the contents and stamps on them. Blackout.

The actors noisily arrange the sets for the last scene; holding torches in their mouths.

VII. HENRY J. BEANS

One table. Two chairs.

Mapa This is nice!

Mapi Yes, like a beer garden, no?

Mapa I will have a beer.

Tombi I can only eat soup – bad stomach.

They all look around happily.

Tombi Anyone cleaning this?

Mapi We should ask for someone to clean the table. I can't see anyone. Shit, man. I hate coming to a place where waiters don't wear uniforms. How do we even know who is – guys, does that man look like a waiter?

Mapa Maybe we can try. Hello!

Mapi Wait. Shhhh. He doesn't look like one.

Tombi They should have some food. Where is the printout?

Mapa What printout?

Mapi She means the menu card.

Mapa The next table has one.

Mapi But there are people at the table.

Mapa And they are already eating.

Tombi Yes, they don't need more food.

She gets up to go get the menu card. Mapi holds her down.

Mapi Are you nuts? You can't just go to someone's table and take their menu card. Let's find the waiter.

Mapa You can ask politely.

Tombi They are all polite here. They won't mind if I ask politely: Excuse me, would you terribly mind if I take this – this –

Mapa (*guffaws*) Menu Card.

Tombi This menu card. Please. What are they eating? (*peers at the adjacent table*) Oh God. Their horrible food. How can they eat such food everyday? All potatoes. No vegetables.

Mapa It is an island. What do you expect?

Mapi Here. Here. I think this man is a waiter.

Tombi (*looks up*) Do you have some food?

Mapi (*preens*) Can you please bring us the menu card? And also the drinks list? Thank you.

Mapa Can you please clean the table too?

Mapi One beer for him. (*pause*)

Mapa Oh yes. Heineken.

They watch the waiter leave.

Mapa He didn't smile.

Mapi Well, he cleaned the table.

Tombi He got the menu card from the other table and gave it to us. I told you we should have / got it from the other table.

Mapi He is the waiter here. He can take the menu cards from different tables.

Mapa *(to no one in particular)* What do you want?

Tombi They have nothing. Chips Chips Chips. Burgers Burgers Burgers. Fish Fish Fish. There is no soup.

Mapi I am having a salad. And a lemonade.

Tombi Call him again. I want to ask whether he has soup.

Nobody responds.

Mapa *(to Mapi)* So this man came to clean my room in the morning. I was sleeping. I was working till 6 in the morning. Yes, six in the morning. I wrote 60 pages last night. I changed everything. I am working with only four characters now. It is a completely new script. You know what – in my last draft, I found I was cutting my funny lines. You know all those funny stuff that happens on the road – you know the man coming out of the manhole – I had cut all of them. Then I realized something and told myself – No, you can't cut these funny stuff. You need to add more funny stuff. You know you are writing a black comedy. It is a black comedy. So yeah this black man comes to my room at eight – I was working till six in the morning – he comes and tells me he has to clean my room. I tell him

I am sleeping. Come after an hour. He comes after an hour! I was very angry. But he said it was his job to clean. So I wore my pants and went down to smoke. And when I came up, he's cleaned everything. He's arranged my books on the table. He's given me new sheets. He's taken away the trash. And he's opened the window to let in fresh air! I look at my room and I tell myself: How are you going to sleep now?

Tombi They came to clean your room? They didn't come to my room. I need a new towel. I don't like this place at all.

Mapi Such lovely flowers. (*to Mapa*) They haven't brought your beer, no?

Mapa shrugs.

I am starving.

Mapa And you want to eat only salad.

Mapi The rest's too expensive. Oh my God. Look there. The kids are so cute. They are having a family gathering there. All so nicely dressed. Where the hell is the waiter?

Tombi He is there – near the Italians.

Mapa How do you know they are Italians?

Tombi Too much make-up. The women. And men –

Mapi Excuse me! Excuse me! Goddamn it. She is just refusing to hear me.

Mapa You saw another waiter?

Mapi Yeah. A waitress. There. Excuse me! What's wrong with them?

Mapa We look poor.

Mapi What? (*to waiter*) Excuse me!

Tombi He said we look poor.

Mapa But you are wearing a nice dress, lady.

Tombi Yeah. It is Zara. I got it on sale. From Rome.

Mapi When did you go to Rome?

Tombi Last year.

Mapa Nice. How's Angel?

Tombi You should call her Marie. I am her mother – I can call her Angel. You have to call her Marie. That's her real name. Angel is my name for her. She is very ill. My husband took her to doctor. Her throat. I tell her: Mama comes next week. But she is a baby. She doesn't understand time. Next week. Next month. Nothing she understands. Yesterday she doesn't want to talk to me. I talk to my husband. My husband says –

Mapi How's Marie?

Tombi *(showing her forefinger and middle finger)* She is two years. I miss her. I don't like this place.

Mapi *(to nobody in particular)* I hope my tomatoes are alright.

Mapa You have tomatoes?

Mapi Yes. I have a patch of tomatoes. And I am always scared someone or some animal might eat them up while I am away. I asked a friend to keep an eye on my tomatoes. But I am not sure I can trust him. You see – my tomatoes are not growing in my apartment. They are growing in a patch of land opposite my apartment. There is a small street in front of my apartment. So on the other side of this street; I bought a small piece of land. Quite small. Must be three times this table. Yeah, three times this table. I grow tomatoes in it. Very good tomatoes and I can see them from my window. I bought binoculars in April. Every morning I wake up, stand by the window, stare at my tomatoes through my binoculars and count my tomatoes. I have a system. I check their size, their colour, their leaves, their stalks, the soil –

Tombi Let's go.

Mapa Why? Listen to his tomatoes story. It is like a movie.

Mapi We'll go somewhere else. I don't think they are going to serve us.

Mapa You know someplace else?

Mapi We'll find another one.

—

Mapa Whose bag is this?

Tombi Oh. It's mine. I bought for my husband and my Angel.

Mapi Show, no?

Tombi T-shirts – these two are mine. And these three – for my husband. He is a big man. And this is for Angel.

Mapi This is so cute!

Mapa Nice toys.

Mapi *(fingering Tombi's jacket and smelling it)* This jacket is nice.

Tombi I really like it! This was not on sale. But I bought it – I like Zara. I think Zara is democratic.

Mapa You are very modern. Your camera, your iPhone –

Mapi And what do you have here?

Tombi Oh. What's that? Oh. sandwiches. I bought for dinner.

Mapi Let's eat these then.

Tombi No, they are my dinner.

Mapi No, we will buy you the same when we go out. Now let's eat them.

Mapa Do you have vegetarian?

Mapi Here. I will take the meat side. You eat this side with the cabbage.

Mapa Mmmm. Lovely.

Tombi That's so like them. Lovely.

Mapi Lovely.

Mapa Lovely.

They laugh.

Tombi Is that a waiter?

Mapi They should seriously wear uniforms.

Tombi What is he saying?

Mapa He is saying we have to leave.

Tombi Why?

Mapa Because we brought in food from outside and eating it here.

Tombi But we were leaving.

Mapa But we didn't leave. We started eating.

Mapi He is saying this is not a park.

Tombi Ask him if there is a park nearby.

Mapi Do you have a park here?

Mapa He is saying we should leave.

Tombi He's already said that. Ask him the park –

Mapa He is telling us again to leave. We –

Mapi People are staring at us.

Tombi Let them stare. All these old women in short skirts –

Mapa And the men are so ugly.

Mapi In summer, short skirts. In winter, short skirts. These women are nuts. Why can't they cover themselves a little more?

Mapa Upper class pornography. Another one is coming.

Mapi Another waiter?

Tombi Waitress.

Mapa (*guffaws*) In your favourite short skirt.

Mapi The colour doesn't suit her.

Mapa And her breasts are sagging.

Mapi She must be like 45.

Tombi Then why is she working as a waitress here?

Mapi Where will she go then?

Mapa Maybe to a department store. Behind the money counter. Zing zing she can tally up my supermarket stuff.

Tombi Now that I am looking at her closely, she is not fancy at all.

Mapi But her make-up is nice. Must be expensive. Must be rich, no? But how can she be rich? She is just a waitress here. Boyfriend must be rich.

Mapi (*to Tombi*) Put your stuff in.

Mapa What should we do with these sandwich packets?

Tombi Leave them here.

Mapi They will clean the table up.

Mapa My fingers have ketchup. (*turns to the waiter at the table*) Can I please have a paper napkin?

Mapi He wants a paper napkin.

Mapa Give me a paper napkin.

Tombi Can you please give him a paper napkin?

Mapi The next table has some. I will get you. Here. Wipe your fingers.

Tombi (*raising her voice*) You said you can't do that. You said you can't go to another table and take stuff when people are eating. You said that when I wanted to get that card / the menu card.

Mapi Doesn't matter now. We are leaving.

Tombi Let's go.

Mapa Lovely.

*All troop out from behind the table and stand in front of the table facing the audience.
And laugh.*

Coda: Dance.

END