

Orgullo Compound

Full-length Play

Synopsis

When Orgullo compound owner Teofie lost all of the money he inherited from his parents to a failed networking business, he has to apply for tenure in the university where he teaches. He is given three months to get his tenure before he is kicked out of the university because of its policy on the number years an untenured faculty member is allowed to render service. He submits a research proposal to use the nanotechnology laboratory so he may get published in a refereed journal. But his half-brother Janus disapproves his proposal.

To get back at Janus, he makes his life miserable in the compound. Janus eventually offers to buy the compound but Teofie refuses it because the Orgullo compound can only be owned by a real Orgullo. Since the residential units are all dilapidated, Teofie loses his tenants. With no source of income once the university kicks him out, he turns to his boyfriend Zosi. But Zosi no longer has money to lend him as he too lost all his savings to Teofie's failed networking business. Teofie learns that Zosi's advisees' thesis proposal which is similar to his proposal was approved by Janus. He tries to get back at Janus once again, but this time around, Zosi asks him to be humble by accepting his present situation.

Teofie tries to accept his situation, but as preventing corrosion on metal, the compound he is proposing proves to be weak.

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Characters:

Teofie, late 40s, gay, short and chubby

Janus, early 40s, Teofie's half-brother, tall and with a macho physique

Esper, early 40s, Janus' wife

Zosi, late 20s, Teofie's boyfriend, bubbly

Mark, 20, Zosi's thesis advisee

Aimee, 20, Zosi's thesis advisee, Mark's girlfriend

Act I

We see the façade of three apartment units. The first unit is occupied by Teofie and Zosi. The second unit is unoccupied and is under renovation. The third unit is occupied by Janus, Esper, and their newborn child Baby J.

In front of Teofie's unit are remnants of a recently concluded party: an old videoke, a long table filled with party food, bottles of beer, plates, glasses, and other usual party stuff. There are several chairs around, a case of empty beer bottles, and an open garbage bag filled with party trash. One of the chairs has several gifts on it.

In front of Janus' unit is a small garden set and several potted flowers.

In front of the unoccupied unit is a mound of unmixed sand and cement with a steel shovel resting on top of it. There's also a pail of water, sacks of cement and scraps of wood. The second unit's roof has a dangling iron sheet which may fall anytime.

We hear Teofie's videoke singing: "You'll See" by Madonna. We also hear Baby J crying. Teofie is out of tune but still sings loudly. Esper gets out of their apartment.)

Teofie: "All by myself

I don't need anyone at all"

Esper: *Kuya Teofie.*

Teofie: *"I know I'll survive*

I know I'll stay alive"

Esper: *Kuya Teofie!*

Teofie: *"All on my own*

I don't need anyone this time

It will be mine"

Esper: For God's sake, *Kuya Teofie!*

(Esper runs toward the videoke.)

Teofie: *"No one can take it from me*

You'll see ..."

(Esper pulls the plug.)

Teofie: You have no right to unplug *my* videoke, in front of *my* house, inside of *my* compound.

Esper: But Baby J can't sleep, *Kuya*

Teofie: You know I'm celebrating my birthday tonight.

Esper: All your guests have already left.

Teofie: With or without guests, Mommy wanted me to sing all throughout my birthday until the next morning.

Esper: But it's different now.

Teofie: My singing makes Mommy happy, here or in heaven. Nothing is different.

Esper: We have Baby J now, *Kuya*.

Teofie: Jasper and Janella started out as babies too, right?

Esper: But you were still living in the main house then.

Teofie: What difference does it make? In front of you, beside you, even behind you, on top of you, or under you, you were used to hearing me sing whenever I throw a videoke party for my friends.

Esper: We were young then, *Kuya*. No high blood pressure. No doctor's advice. No maintenance.

Teofie: Is it my problem if you still decided to have a child even in your forties? In *your* forties, Esper. My God! After Jasper and Janella grew up, finished college, moved out and settled into their jobs, then boom! Another baby for you and Janus.

Esper: Baby J's running a fever. He needs to get some sleep.

Teofie: *My* compound, *my* rules. Nothing has changed.

(Janus comes out of their apartment while carrying the still crying Baby J. Esper notices them, she immediately runs to them and takes Baby J from Janus.)

Esper: Why did you take him out?

Janus: He won't stop. I no longer know what to do.

(Esper goes inside. Janus and Teofie look at each other. Pause. Baby J gradually stops crying.)

Janus: You are very inconsiderate.

Teofie: It's my compound. I can do whatever I want to.

Janus: You lost half of your tenants because you kept on throwing videoke parties for your rowdy friends.

Teofie: I lost *all* of my tenants because of all those new dormitories, boarding houses, condotels and dormitels sprouting like mushrooms near the campus. That's why

I'm renovating all unoccupied units including the main house.

Janus: Students couldn't study for their exams. Instructors and professors couldn't prepare for their classes. You kept on losing tenants that's why you couldn't make your units compete with the new rentals near the campus. You even had to move out of the main house because it has already been condemned.

Teofie: You don't have the right to tell me how to run *my* compound.

Janus: For crying out loud, *Kuya* Teofie. We're just asking you to stop making noise so we can all get some sleep.

Teofie: Baby J cries out loud every single night. Have I ever complained?

Janus: He's just a baby, *Kuya*.

(Pause. Teofie is about to plug the videoke but Janus pulls him.)

Janus: Why can't you understand a simple request?

Teofie: You were the one who denied my *only* request.

Janus: To sing your lungs out while our baby is running a fever?

Teofie: You disapproved my proposal.

(Silence. Janus takes a pack of cigarette from his pocket. He lights one stick, sits in a garden chair, and starts to smoke the cigarette.)

Janus: That's what this is all about, right?

Teofie: I submitted a fool-proof, airtight research proposal.

Janus: I already told you, *Kuya* Teofie. No product, no approval.

Teofie: A comparative analysis of all polyaniline-based epoxy coatings for steel. The most effective on corrosion resistance *is* the product.

Janus: We need a marketable product. A marketable product, *Kuya*. Not an assessment of all the products which are already available in the market.

Teofie: The nanotechnology program is supposed to be an academic initiative, not a business establishment.

Janus: The university president will shut the nanotech program down if it doesn't earn in the next three years.

Teofie: But I need to use the nanotech laboratory to conduct research, and come up with an article for a refereed journal, Janus. You know I need to get published because it's the only way for me to get my tenure.

Janus: My offer still stands.

Teofie: How many times do I have to tell you? I can't accept it.

Janus: Esper's inheritance can shoulder all renovation costs.

Teofie: It was in her deathbed, Janus. I promised Mommy, I will never sell the Orgullo compound.

Janus: I'm also an Orgullo.

Teofie: But Janus, you're not a genuine Orgullo.

(Silence. Janus continues to smoke. After a while, he goes to the chair with gifts and gets one gift.

He gives it to Teofie. Teofie unwraps the gift.)

Janus: Happy birthday.

Teofie: Are you mocking me?

Janus: It's how to DIY your own house's renovation.

Teofie: You're really rubbing it into me, aren't you?

Janus: I never meddled with any of your investments.

Teofie: “Magic cards, really *Kuya* Teofie? It’s just a fad, your store will close down in a couple of months ... A computer shop, *Kuya* Teofie? There are already too many computer shops near the campus ... A coffee shop? How can you compete with Starbucks, *Kuya* Teofie? ... Networking? It’s just a scam. You won’t be able to sell all those supplements, *Kuya* Teofie...”

Janus: You asked me for my opinion.

Teofie: And you always gloated each time I lost my investment.

Janus: I was only trying to help so you won’t make the same mistakes over and over again.

Teofie: (*Shows book*) This is gloating, Janus. You know I’m doing the renovations myself because I can no longer afford to hire carpenters after that scam of a networking business folded up.

Janus: (*Gets book*) This is my way of helping you.

Teofie: If you really want to help me, you’ll approve my research proposal so I may get my tenure.

Janus: I can’t allow any research project to use the laboratory if it won’t bring in profit to the program.

Teofie: I invested everything that was left of the money I inherited from Mommy and Daddy on that networking business, Janus. I thought I would earn enough and get this compound back on its feet.

Janus: It has been your pattern, *Kuya*. Invest on whatever is the fad, gamble all your money on putting up a business based on whatever you fancy at a given time. Each time you fail, you always say, “It’s ok, I still have the compound. Ten apartment units plus a main house. Mommy and Daddy ensured that I’ll be well taken care of for

the rest of my life.” Well, you only have eight useless rental units now and an unlivable main house.

Teofie: That’s why I’m asking for your help. I have no money left in the bank now. No units to rent out. And if I won’t get that tenure within the sem., I’ll have no source of income to keep me alive.

Janus: You can transfer to other schools.

Teofie: I can’t transfer to another town. I can’t leave this compound.

Janus: Then return to one of the other schools here.

Teofie: Which one? I had to leave them all because they didn’t give me my tenure. I can no longer return to anyone of them. This is my last hope, Janus. My last hope to teach until I retire. My last hope to resurrect this compound which my great grandfather built. Which Mommy wanted me to keep until the day I die.

Janus: But without the promise of profit, I won’t be able to defend any research project to the university president.

Teofie: But you’re the head of the nanotech program.

Janus: All projects must now have the stamp of the Office of the University President.

Teofie: He’s your fraternity brother. Talk to him as his brod.

Janus: I can’t use our fraternity for something like this.

Teofie: Something like this? Wasn’t being appointed as head of the nanotech program something *like* this?

Janus: I have a PhD in chemistry from Texas A & M, *Kuya* Teofie.

Teofie: Half of our colleagues have PhDs in chemistry from Texas A & M.

Janus: I chaired our department for nine years. Most of our colleagues have no

administrative experience. I'm the only one qualified to head the nanotech program. It's not something *like* this.

(Silence. Janus continues to smoke. Teofie goes in front of the second unit, gets the pail of water, pours water on the unmixed cement and sand, uses the shovel to mix them.)

Teofie: Tuition for a sem., tuition for a year. Monthly installment, quarterly installment. "Janella can't take the exams tomorrow if we can't pay her tuition today, *Kuya* Teofie ... Jasper can't graduate for we haven't fully paid his tuition fee, *Kuya* Teofie --"

Janus: I paid you back. Every single time I borrowed money from you, I paid you back in full.

Teofie: Gifts for your birthday, Esper's birthday, Jasper's, Janella's, now Baby J. Christmas gifts, new year's gifts, graduation gifts. "I need a new cellphone, Uncle Teofie ... Daddy can't buy me a new laptop with a faster processor and a bigger memory, Uncle Teofie ... We're required to have our own tablet in class, Uncle Teofie ..."

Janus: I didn't force you to give anything to me, to my wife, or to any of my children.

Teofie: "Jasper has hernia, *Kuya* Teofie ... Janella has dengue, *Kuya* Teofie ... Esper's in the hospital for hypoglycemia, *Kuya* Teofie ..." I gave you everything you asked for. Everything your wife and your children asked from me, I gave it all to them. For years, Janus. For years, I thought you were my family.

Janus: We treated you as part of our family.

Teofie: You treated me as just another unmarried gay uncle who must pay his relatives with gifts and money to be part of their family.

(Pause. Teofie continues mixing cement and sand. Janus approaches him, gets the shovel from him.)

Janus: You still have three months to get your tenure before the university kicks you out.

Teofie: And since when have we been publishing journal articles without experiment, without research, and without months of peer review? You yourself worked on your tenure for two years. For two fucking years, Janus.

Janus: You should have started working on your tenure two years ago.

Teofie: How would I know that people I treated as friends were all liars and users? Dirt, Janus. They were all dirt to pure metal, corroding whatever good name, clout, power, money, and kindness you have. And each time I would have saved enough to make the compound competitive, another dirt will set off another corrosion. It wasn't a pattern, Janus. It was a cycle.

Janus: I kept reminding you, don't trust anyone immediately. Make him work to earn your trust.

Teofie: Those dirt, they were just lining up to Mommy. Asking for a loan, for a little food, used clothes, little extension for the rent, little alms, little pity, even whatever little garbage we can throw to them. It wasn't a matter of trust. It was a matter of remembering that they once owed us.

Janus: You can't expect people to always pay their debts.

Teofie: But it was always good at first, remember? With the last one, I was able to give Jasper his first motorcycle as graduation gift. And Janella's debut? We were able to celebrate it in Hong Kong.

Janus: Why don't you just come up with another proposal, *Kuya*?

Teofie: Polyaniline is my research agenda.

Janus: Then come up with a polyaniline-based epoxy coating which will have better corrosion protection performance than all the products available in the market.

Teofie: You want me to come up with a new nanocomposite in the span of three months?

Janus: I came up with nanosilica powder to improve germination parameters of Magilas tomato in two months' time.

Teofie: You only synthesized nanosilica and see if just like nanotitania on spinach, it will work on Magilas tomato.

Janus: Then synthesize your own nanosilica, fuse it with polyaniline composites (*lifts shovel*) and prevent corrosion on steel

Teofie: My master's thesis is on polyaniline, Janus. Not nanosilica.

Janus: Read on, study more, acquire new knowledge. It's a fast-paced world now. We can no longer rely on our college or graduate studies notes.

Teofie: You owe me your education, Janus. Whatever you have achieved, you owe it to me.

Janus: I was under different scholarships from college to PhD. You had nothing to do with my education.

Teofie: You left me to take care of Mommy and Daddy while you were in Manila. Womanizing, getting drunk with your brods., and God knows doing whatever other unspeakable things.

Janus: I never denied I had my adventurous phase. But I had focus, *Kuya*. I was focused on one interest that I graduated on time and was able to pursue a career.

Teofie: While Mommy was having her weekly dialysis and Daddy his chemotherapy.

Janus: For crying out loud, *Kuya*. They had caregivers and a battery of servants. You can't blame anyone for the twenty years you wasted on hopping from one school to another trying to find a school which will give you a diploma even if all you ever wanted to do was throw videoke parties for your friends, play computer games, collect science fiction merchandises, and drown yourself on the Internet.

Teofie: I'm an Orgullo, Janus. All Orgullos are given the luxury to explore their interests before pursuing a career.

Janus: Well, you're one Orgullo who does need to pursue a career now, *Kuya*. The Orgullo compound is dying. You may not get your tenure. You don't need a career. You just need a job.

(Janus drops the shovel, heads to his apartment. Teofie gets the book from the garden set and throws it at Janus' back.)

Teofie: Bastard! You'll never be a genuine Orgullo! Never!

Janus: *(Grabs Teofie by the collar)* I never asked to be an Orgullo. If I can only shove your shitty surname into your mouth so you may shit it out like the real piece of shit it really is, I would have done it decades ago.

Teofie: *(Repeatedly slaps Janus)* You ungrateful bastard! Ingrate! Ingrate!

Janus: *(Throws Teofie to the ground)* That's the last time I'll allow you or any Orgullo to hit me.

Teofie: You're so bitter for not being a genuine Orgullo that you lived your life proving to the world that you are way better than I am.

Janus: Better at what? Playing computer games? Scifi trivia? Videoke singing? I don't give a shit about what you do with your life, just stay out of my life.

Teofie: All your life you've been competing with me. You took Chemistry because you knew it was my course. You joined a fraternity because you knew fraternities weren't recruiting me to join them. You even became an ROTC officer after you learned I dropped out of ROTC because the commandant did not acknowledge the medical certificate for my asthma.

Janus: It was Daddy who wanted me to major in Chemistry, join his fraternity, and be an ROTC officer like him.

Teofie: You were competing for Daddy's love because I was the one named after him. Teofilo Orgullo III. I even carry the name of my great grandfather who was the first mayor of this town. While you, you! You were just another bastard free loading on the Orgullo name.

Janus: I got a scholarship to study in Manila not because I was an Orgullo. Fulbright did not look at what surname I was using to fund my graduate studies at Texas A & M. I was hired by the university not because I was an Orgullo. I never needed your surname. And your surname no longer has any value at all. None!

Teofie: Then stop free loading on my Orgullo compound.

Janus: I'm paying you rent, *Kuya*.

Teofie: *(To Janus' house)* That house is owned by the Orgullos.

Janus: Daddy left it to me.

Teofie: It stands on the soil of the Orgullos.

Janus: That's why I'm paying you rent.

Teofie: I want you and your family out of my compound.

Janus: Why don't you try to buy my house first?

Teofie: Buy it? Take it with you. Take it wherever you go. Start dismantling that house tomorrow and go, go, go far away from my compound.

(Teofie heads to his apartment. Janus pulls him back.)

Janus: I'm fully paid for the whole year.

Teofie: I'll return your payment in full.

Janus: How will you return it to me? With sacks of cement, shovels, scraps of wood?

(Laughs) I'm aware of what you're doing.

Teofie: The only thing I'm doing is to kick you out of my compound.

Janus: Exactly. *(Laughs)* You've been doing it for the whole week. One whole week after I disapproved your proposal. Ranting against me from one laboratory to another and spreading those lies about me on the Internet are not enough?

Teofie: I don't know what you're talking about.

Janus: You think you can get your revenge by depriving us of sleep with your videoke singing?

Teofie: Leave my compound. Leave. Now!

Janus: You scattered construction materials all over the compound, even in the parking area in front of the main house. I had to park my car outside. My car's been scratched, headlights been robbed, tire been slashed.

Teofie: I'm renovating the units. Of course, construction materials will be all over the compound. It had nothing to do with your car. I don't even like your car with its vanity plate screaming your initials.

Janus: You locked the gates at 5PM even if you knew I always come home at six.

Teofie: Because of too many scoundrels these days, Janus. Look at what they did to your car. I was only protecting the compound from too many dirt.

Janus: You changed the locks, *Kuya*. Changed them without giving me or Esper duplicate-keys.

Teofie: I forgot. I was busy learning how to renovate on my own.

Janus: You just can't help it, can you? Get back at those who do not give you what you want. You're right. You're an Orgullo.

(Janus heads to his apartment. Teofie picks up the shovel. He's about to hit Janus with the shovel but Janus senses it and is able to grab the shovel's shaft. Teofie does not let go of the shovel. They fight over who'll get the shovel.)

Teofie: You're just the son of a cabaret dancer who seduced Daddy to get herself pregnant.

Janus: Daddy acknowledged me as his son.

Teofie: After introducing you as a servant.

Janus: Because all of you Orgullos are self-righteous hypocrites who won't accept that all of you are not perfect!

(Janus punches Teofie on the face and completely takes the shovel from him. Teofie falls to the ground. Pause. Zosi comes out of the apartment, immediately goes to Teofie.)

Zosi: OMG. What happened, Beh? I fell asleep. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry *(To Janus)*
What happened, Sir Janus? What happened?

(Janus drops the shovel, then enters his apartment. Zosi helps Teofie get up. He brings him to the table and sits him in one of the chairs. Zosi opens Teofie's mouth, inspect it.)

Zosi: Did you lose a tooth, Beh? (*Searches for ice*) We no longer have ice. But the water is still cold. (*Gets a cloth, soaks it in water and gently pats Teofie's face*) Forget about revenge, Beh. Forget about revenge.

Teofie: I will sue that bastard. I will sue him.

Zosi: That will only cause you more trouble, Beh.

Teofie: And you think this is not trouble, yet?

Zosi: I mean, the scandal Beh. Orgullos are allergic to scandals.

Teofie: (*Holds on Zosi's shoulders*) Zosi, look at me. Do I have a blackeye?

Zosi: Yes, Beh.

Teofie: (*Lets go of Zosi's shoulders*) Then, I have the right to sue him.

Zosi: But you'll need money to sue him, Beh.

Teofie: I can't allow this to pass.

Zosi: But you're still paying off your debts to your aunts.

Teofie: Quiet. He may hear us.

Zosi: Sorry, Beh. I didn't know that –

Teofie: (*Whispers*) He can't know that I'm still paying the money I borrowed from my aunts when Mommy was having her dialysis and Daddy his chemotherapy. He'll use it as another bargaining chip.

Zosi: (*Whispers*) Can't you talk to your aunts and ask them to not pressure you to pay them until you get your tenure?

Teofie: A genuine Orgullo keeps his word, Zosi.

Zosi: But they are your relatives.

Teofie: The more that we keep our word to our relatives.

Zosi: But Beh –

Teofie: You have to lend me money again so I may sue that son of a bitch.

Zosi: I already gave you my savings to buy those supplements. I don't even know to whom am I to sell them. I still have five huge boxes of supplements in the department, Beh.

Teofie: You'll still have your salary next month.

Zosi: We need to eat, Beh. Pay the bills. Buy your maintenance.

Teofie: Then apply for a GSIS loan again.

Zosi: I'm not yet through paying my last loan to jumpstart the renovations.

Teofie: Then, think. Think of something so I may sue that bastard.

Zosi: I have an advisee who has an uncle working at the Public Attorney's Office.

Teofie: That's for indigents, Zosi.

Zosi: The lawyers there are for free.

Teofie: Exactly. Because it's for the poor. Do you imagine the shame I'll be suffering from? My great grandfather was the topnotch lawyer of this town. That's why he became the first mayor. Two of my uncles lawyered for the university.

Zosi: But they're all dead, Beh.

Teofie: If they have been alive, that bastard will rot in jail.

(Teofie suddenly stands up. Heads to the apartment.)

Zosi: Are you going to sleep now, Beh?

Teofie: My uncles may be dead, Zosi. But they still have colleagues. I will call them all for I'm sure they still remember my uncles.

(Teofie goes inside the apartment. Zosi starts cleaning up. Janus comes out of his apartment. He

lights a cigarette. Takes a few puffs and sees Zosi. He approaches Zosi.)

Janus: Teofie's finally asleep?

Zosi: Yes, Sir Janus.

Janus: Threatened to sue me?

(Zosi does not reply, continues cleaning up.)

Janus: I'm not surprised. They were fond of suing people before.

Zosi: You gave him a blackeye, Sir Janus.

Janus: His mother sued his Grade 1 teacher for hitting Teofie's palm with a stick because he pushed one of his classmates off the stairs.

Zosi: Teofie is nice, Sir. Kind. He just fights back when he thinks he's been wronged.

Janus: Oh, come on. A comparative analysis, Zosimo? Everyone knows it won't bring in profit.

Zosi: But you didn't have the right to hit him, Sir.

Janus: He was going to hit me with a shovel.

Zosi: He's just desperate to get his tenure.

Janus: He thinks he can get away with anything because everyone owes something to the Orgullos.

Zosi: His mother took you in, Sir.

Janus: Because at first, Daddy introduced me to her as a servant.

Zosi: Teofie showed me some family pictures. You seemed happy as a child.

Janus: Happy? Everything was heaven to me. A poor child who gets to live in a mansion. So what if I was a servant? First time in my life, I got to eat six times a day. Roofs did not leak whenever it rained. No rats to wake you up at night. Plus they had

faucets. And showers, too. Then my mother died. Daddy grew a conscience and revealed to Teofie's mother that I was his son. It was hell after that.

Zosi: It's not easy for any wife to accept her husband's child with another woman, Sir.

Janus: Teofie believed his mother was so kind and good to me. Giving me clothes and toys. Sending me to school. Having me in their parties, making me part of their family. But that's the problem, Zosimo. You'll never know what another person really feels.

Zosi: But they did help you, Sir. Didn't they?

Janus: Help? Help is a tricky thing. You can never be certain if you're truly rendering help or something else.

Zosi: You have a good life now, Sir. Let bygones be bygones. You can move on now and help Teofie get his tenure because *(sings from Madonna's "This Used to be My Playground)* "And why do they always say? Don't look back, keep your head held high, don't ask them why because life is short, and before you know you're feeling old, and your heart is breaking, don't hold on to the past, well that's too much to ask."

Janus: *(Laughs)* You're a happy person, Zosimo. That's why you're still my favorite student.

Zosi: I'm not surprised, Sir. After taking three courses under you, you have no choice but to make me your favorite.

Janus: *(Chuckles then gets serious)* Yeah, you're right. That's why at times it makes me sad to see how you keep on tolerating Teofie's bullshits.

Zosi: You remember how many times you almost dropped me from class because of

excessive absences, Sir? I give it my all whenever I love someone. I believe that,
(sings from Madonna's "Frozen") "You only see what your eyes want to see, how
can life be what you want it to be? You're frozen, when your heart's not open."
(Stands up and performs) "You're so consumed with how much you get, you waste
your time with hate and regret, you're broken, when your heart's not open, mmm,
mmm, mmm."

Janus: *(Laughs and claps)* Damn it, Zosimo. Your playlist is old. No wonder you fell for
Teofie, you love the old.

Zosi: *(In jest)* Madonna is not that old, Sir!

Janus: But Teofie is. That's why he's also a huge Madonna fan.

Zosi: You're stereotyping, Sir.

Janus: Oh, come on, Zosimo. I'm not a Madonna fan but I know who she is ever since I
was a child. Even heard my elementary teachers singing "Material Girl," and "Like
a Virgin."

Zosi: Age is a matter of attitude, Sir.

Janus: And tolerating someone's bullshit is a matter of self-respect.

Zosi: It's called unconditional love, Sir. The good and the bad, you embrace them all.

Janus: That's why I think you're wasting your life.

Zosi: But I'm already submitting an article for publication, Sir. I'll be applying for tenure
next schoolyear.

Janus: You're wasting your life on loving someone who doesn't deserve you.

Zosi. I'm happy with Teofie, Sir. I'm really happy with Teofie.

(Pause. Zosi continues cleaning up. Janus lights another stick of cigarette.)

Janus: You know my unit? That's nothing compared to the main house. It was really beautiful, Zosimo. It wasn't just huge. There were paintings and sculptures. Antique furniture, wide curtains, everything looked pristine. And my bedroom was the size of my unit's sala and kitchen combined.

Zosi: Teofie loves showing me pictures of the main house. The first time I saw one, I thought it was a palace in a fairytale.

Janus: But I begged our Dad, Zosimo. Begged him to transfer me to any unit, or to any shanty. I even begged him to transfer me to a doghouse.

Zosi: A doghouse?

Janus: I'd rather live in a doghouse than in a palace where I was treated like a dog.

Zosi: Teofie said his mother became manic depressive because of her kidney disease, Sir. There may be times when she was no longer aware of what she was doing.

Janus: They were *matapobres*, Zosimo. The worst kind of *matapobre*. Look at you. Teofie took you in when you were what? Twelve? A street urchin with a drunkard for a mother and a petty thief for a father. You didn't even know how many siblings do you actually have. Your parents were so grateful to Teofie, they thought he was helping you all by taking you in. But would they still be grateful if they knew Teofie treated you like a dog?

Zosi: Acts of service is my language of love, Sir. And you're aware about his asthma and his many allergies. He's an orphan. No family of his own. All alone. And (*sings from Madonna's "True Blue."*) "I've had other guys, I've looked into their eyes but I never knew love before, 'til you walked through my door, I've had other lips,

I've sailed a thousand ships, but no matter where I go, you're the one for me, *Teofie*, this I know, 'cause it's *Teofie*, you're the one I'm dreaming of, your heart fits me like a glove, and I'm gonna be true blue, *Teofie*, I love you."

Janus: *(Laughs)* Everything, everything to you is about him. Like a dog to his owner.

Zosi: You know I owe him my life, Sir. Everything I have. Everything I am.

Janus: Then why don't you help him get his tenure?

Zosi: I'm helping him, Sir. I was the one who edited his proposal. I even suggested that he includes composites in his study instead of only concentrating on pure epoxy coated steel.

Janus: Why don't you just give him your article?

Zosi: I can't do that, Sir. You shouldn't be suggesting that. It's unethical, Sir. Totally unethical.

Janus: Then your love is not unconditional after all.

(Pause. Janus starts to head back to his apartment.)

Zosi: Teofie won't accept it.

Janus: You offered?

Zosi: No. But I know he won't.

Janus: He asked me to talk to the university president as a fraternity brother.

Zosi: But that's different, Sir. You know how Teofie is. He's so well-connected. He knows a lot of people. He's been asked to run for city councilor twice.

Janus: The Orgullo surname.

Zosi: Yes. He's proud of his name. Teofilo Orgullo III –

Janus: -- named after his great grandfather –

Zosi and Janus: -- who was the first mayor of this town.

Zosi: He can ask for favors. That's not beneath him. But it stops there.

Janus: What stops where?

Zosi: Being unethical, Sir. The bad things people do to get ahead in the game. To get what they want even if they don't deserve it. Teofie won't go as far as taking credit for something he did not do. He may have his flaws, Sir. But he's too proud of his name to deliberately besmirch it.

(Pause. Janus approaches Zosi.)

Janus: You don't just love him. You look up to him.

Zosi: You can't love someone if you don't respect him, Sir.

Janus: He did not tell you?

Zosi: Tell me what?

Janus: He knew his mother treated me like a dog.

Zosi: It's rare for the legal wife to not see her husband's love child as a reminder of his infidelity. That's why she treats him like a dog. But figuratively, Sir. Figuratively.

Janus: When the sun was still up, she was kind to me. Gave me baths, changed my clothes, combed my hair, tied my shoes. She even tutored me from time to time. Daddy was so happy, his wife was so gracious. She had Teofie play with me. Had him share his toys, his books, his stuff. Everything was perfect as long as I did what she wanted me to do. But when I didn't dance in a party she threw for her *mahjong* friends, when I had dirt on my uniform after she wanted me to win as A-1 Child, when I broke a glass, wrote the wrong answer in a test, evenings were hell. She'd wake me up, drag me to the doghouse. "Don't you dare tell you little bastard or I'll

kill you.” She’d chain me to the doghouse, force me to eat with the dogs, drink with them, and at times even pee and poop with them.

Zosi: Sir ...

Janus: Then one night, while I was eating dogfood with the dogs, I heard a voice, “Mommy. Mommy.” It was Teofie. His mother ran to him, “Don’t tell anyone. Janus is a dog. Son of a bitch.”

Zosi: Teofie is different from his mother. He treated you like a real brother. He was always helping you and Ma’am Esper out. He loves Jasper and Janella, and Baby J too, for sure.

Janus: He was nice to us whenever we did what he wanted us to do. Just like his mother. Just like any dog owner. *(Pauses, starts to chuckle)* You really are my favorite student. I don’t usually share this to just about anyone.

Zosi: I don’t know what to say, Sir except *(sings “Secret” by Madonna)* “Something’s comin’ over, mmm mmm, something’s comin’ over me, *Sir Janus* got a secret.” *(Laughs nervously)* I really don’t know what to say, Sir.

Janus: It’s ok. I’m not saying he’ll also chain you to a doghouse and make you eat, and poop with the dogs. But if he asks you for something and you won’t give it to him, if he wants you to do something and you refuse to do it, he will punish you. You have to remember that, in case he asks for your article.

(Janus heads to the garden set, sits, lights a cigarette stick and starts smoking. Zosi takes some party stuff inside the apartment. Esper comes out of the apartment. She sits beside Janus, puts her head on his shoulder.)

Esper: We should really get a *yaya*.

Janus: I thought you're scared of trusting Baby J to a stranger? You even left the university to take care of him.

Esper: It's tiring the hell out of me.

Janus: We can ask around. Or maybe your *Ate* knows someone.

Esper: *(Looks at Janus)* Or we can live near *Ate*. Buy a house in their subdivision. We can live in peace, Janus.

Janus: I can't transfer to another university. Who knows? If I do well with the nanotech program, you may be married to the next university president.

Esper: Whose half-brother will kick him out of his compound.

Janus: He can't just do that. He has no money now.

Esper: Did you deliberately disapprove his proposal so he won't get his tenure?

Janus: It's really a lousy proposal, Esper.

Esper: Then you'll be fine without owning this compound?

Janus: I think he'll eventually sell the compound.

Esper: *(Moves away)* Janus, I've been thinking a lot these days. I'm no longer keen on buying this compound anymore.

Janus: But it's perfect, Esper. Nearest to the campus. We only need to renovate the units or construct a residential building and our kids will be taken care of even after they have kids of their own.

Esper: But we can always look for another property. Something better than this compound.

Janus: You know why I'm so eager to buy this.

Esper: That's why I'm no longer keen on owning it.

Janus: All those years, Esper. All those years when the Orgullos treated me like dirt.

Esper: I know. They'd have you in their parties only to humiliate you. Made you act like a clown or pester you with questions about your mother's past. Believe me, Janus. I understand. They scoffed at you, mocked your dreams. Told people you won't amount to anything. But you already proved them wrong.

Janus: First, this compound. Then their coconut plantation, *rambutan* farm, that huge lot near the municipal hall rented to a gas station. One property at a time until we own everything which once belonged to the Orgullos.

Esper: Janus, remember when we only wanted a simple life? Raise kids who will have their own happy families. Enjoy our old age playing with our grandchildren. Attend alumni homecomings of our fraternity and sorority. Forget about the past, your past, so we may face a happy future together.

Janus: It's not that easy to –

Esper: When you became department chair, you only wanted to own this compound. Now that you're nanotech program head, you want to own all properties of the Orgullos. I'm afraid of what you will want to own next once you become university president.

Janus: But it's within our reach, Esper. Most Orgullos no longer care for their properties. They've already settled in other countries. The ones left here are either too old or too desperate like *Kuya*. All of their properties are within our reach, Esper. All of their properties.

Esper: What's really within our reach, Janus? You come home telling me of an Orgullo who lost his property, an Orgullo who left his family, an Orgullo who went bankrupt, who got sick, who died. Each misery, each suffering of an Orgullo became your happy pill, Janus. *Kuya* Teofie's mother has been dead for almost two

decades now. You're no longer chained to the Orgullos. You're no longer anyone's dog.

Janus: *(Chortles)* No wonder all my brods were pushing me to marry you.

Esper: All my sisses also pushed me to marry you. *(Gets serious)* I don't want any of our children to be chained to your past, Janus. Please lose the chain.

(Silence. We hear Baby J crying. Esper and Janus get up.)

Janus: You sure you don't want to get a *yaya*?

Esper: As long as we're in this together, we don't need anyone else.

(They hold hands and enter the apartment. Teofie storms out of his apartment. Zosi is behind him.)

Teofie: I called everyone up. Googled most of them to know their numbers.

Zosi: But it's already late, Beh.

Teofie: I witnessed how those people Zosi, those people flying all over the place with the mere mention of my uncle's name.

Zosi: Perhaps you woke them up, Beh. That's why they were cranky.

Teofie: Ingrates. All of them, ingrates. They were mere paralegals, researchers, minions of my uncles.

Zosi: You can always call them up again, Beh.

Teofie: I won't be begging anyone of them ever again.

(Mark and Aimee rush in. Aimee has a gift with her.)

Mark: Oh, thank God. Sorry, Sir Zosi. Happy birthday, Sir Teofie.

Aimee: *(Gives gift to Teofie)* Our car broke down, Sir. We were in Manila. We thought we'd really, really be late and you'll both be asleep. So we decided to just drop by and leave your gift on your doorstep. *(Shakes Teofie's hand)* Happy birthday, Sir.

Mark: Our phones also went low batt, Sir. Really, sorry. We just wanted to give you our gift. And happy birthday again, Sir Teofie.

(Mark and Aimee are about to leave.)

Zosi: Why don't you have coffee first?

Teofie: We still have food. A lot of food.

Aimee: We're fine, Sir. We really just dropped by to leave our gift. A simple token for keeping our adviser happy.

Zosi: That's why you're my favorite advisees. You always know what to say. *(To Teofie)*
You remember Mark and Aimee, Beh?

Teofie: Aimee the grade conscious cum laude wannabe. And Mark of course, whom I almost failed in Introduction to Polymer Chemistry.

Zosi: Running for honors, Beh. Both of them.

Teofie: *(To Aimee and Mark)* The more that you deserve coffee and some snacks.

Mark: There really is no need, Sir to –

Teofie: You do want me to keep your adviser happy, don't you?

(Mark and Aimee laugh a little. Teofie goes inside his apartment.)

Zosi: Have a seat, feel at home. I'll just help your Sir Teofie.

(Zosi goes inside the apartment. Mark and Aimee sit.)

Aimee: Why don't we just blurt it out?

Mark: It's almost sunrise, Aimee. We're tired, they're tired.

Aimee: We wanted to attend the party because we believed that it was the perfect time.

Mark: But the party's over, Aimee. I didn't know my car would break down in the middle of a traffic jam.

Aimee: We already made it here, in one piece, thank God. Now, we have to focus, Mark.

Mark: Look, yes. People in their birthday parties, they're definitely in a good mood. So whatever bad news they receive, there's less chance that they'll blow their top. But the party is over, Aimee. We already missed our chance.

Aimee: This is our chance. This is even better than a party, Mark. Over coffee. Only us.

Mark: That's even scarier. We're the only ones he'll scream at.

Aimee: What do you want? That big scene he created after Sir Janus disapproved his proposal? Storming one laboratory after another while screaming at everyone?

Mark: That's the perfect scene. A lot of people as witnesses. Pictures posted on social media. A lot of people talking about it. So if Sir Teofie starts his smear campaign against us, no one will believe him.

Aimee: I don't know, Mark. But my gut feel says that he'll just smear Sir Janus' name once more. You know? Like what he already did. Spread rumors about him even to his classes.

Mark: He also does that to his students, Aimee. You know what they say. If you say or do anything which annoys Sir Teofie, he'll try to destroy you. Doesn't matter who you are.

Aimee: But Sir Zosi will eventually know. It's better this way. We'll see Sir Teofie's reaction. We'll know if he'll with angry at us or with Sir Janus or with all three of us instead of waking up one day to a flood of statuses, tweets, dm's and pm's alluding to what Sir Teofie already spread about us.

Mark: You know how my parents spy on my social media accounts. They'll believe Sir Teofie than they'll believe me since he's our teacher. They won't just grill me,

Aimee. They'll cut my allowance, cancel my credit cards, and repossess my car.

Aimee: Mark, I'm already really, really, really tired of this drama. All the what-ifs. All our planning. I no longer want to prolong this. I can no longer handle the stress. I already told you, my scholarship raised the maintaining mid-term average. I'll need the stipend for our thesis. I can't afford to lose my scholarship in the middle of the sem. If Sir Teofie gets angry with us, smears our name, and God knows what else he will do, so be it. Please. I just want this over and done with.

(Pause. Mark holds Aimee's hand.)

Mark: Ok. Ok. We'll tell them now.

(Aimee kisses Mark on the lips. Zosi and Teofie come out of the apartment. They carry trays with snacks and cups of coffee. They start serving them.)

Zosi: Have your pre-breakfast snacks and coffee first children, before you do things only adults are allowed to do.

(They laugh. They start eating and drinking coffee.)

Teofie: You're finishing your thesis this sem.?

Mark: Hopefully we can finish the experiment this sem., Sir.

Teofie: What's your topic?

Mark: Anti-corrosive epoxy coating for steel with Nano-SiO₂ Polyaniline, Sir.

Teofie: Nanosilica?

Mark: Yes, Sir.

Teofie: *(Laughs, to Aimee)* Oh, Hija. If you plan to get married after graduation, prepare to become an old maid.

Zosi: They're brilliant students, Beh. They'll finish their thesis. And who knows? They may win the best thesis award.

Teofie: That bastard Janus, treats the nanotech lab as his own. He did not allow me to use it for my research project. And to think I'm a faculty member. You think he'll allow students to use his precious nanotech lab?

Aimee: Actually, Sir Teofie. Sir Janus already approved our proposal.

(Silence. Mark and Aimee look at each other. Teofie and Zosi look at each other. Teofie suddenly cleans up.)

Teofie: You had your coffee. You may leave now.

Mark and Aimee: Happy birthday, Sir.

(Mark and Aimee leave hurriedly. Teofie rushes to Janus' apartment. Zosi follows him. Teofie repeatedly knocks at the door.)

Teofie: Janus! Janus! You bastard! Janus!

Zosi: They may already be asleep, Beh.

(Teofie continues to knock at the door. We hear Baby J's cry.)

Teofie: Janus! Ingrate! Janus!

(Janus opens the door, gets out of the apartment.)

Janus: What the fuck is wrong with you, *Kuya*?

Teofie: Don't call me *Kuya*!

Janus: Don't yell.

Teofie: This is my compound you bastard. I can yell for however long or however loud I want to!

Zosi: Beh, stop it, Beh. Please. *(To Janus)* Sorry, Sir Janus. Sorry, Sir.

Teofie: Don't apologize to that bastard!

Janus: We were already asleep, *Kuya*. Why don't you get some sleep, too?

Teofie: How can I sleep if I know you sabotaged my tenure?

Janus: *(To Zosi)* See what I told you? You give your unconditional love to someone who barks like a dog in the middle of the night.

Teofie: Don't talk to Zosi. He's not part of this. This is only between me and you.

Janus: How can he not be part of this? You have him chained to you like a lapdog.

Teofie: You have an issue with dogs? Any dog is better than you. You're not just a bastard. You're dirt. Dirt!

Janus: I will no longer tolerate your insults. Talk to me when you act like a decent human being.

(Janus starts to enter his apartment. Teofie pulls him back.)

Teofie: You're the indecent one.

Janus: You've been singing all night. And now you're screaming at sunrise. And you're calling me the indecent one?

Teofie: You told me you disapproved my proposal because you only approve research projects which will bring profit to the nanotech program. You *approved* the proposal of Zosi's advisees. Mere students. Researching on po-ly-a-ni-line!

Janus: Anti-corrosive epoxy coating for steel with Nano-SiO₂-Polyaniline, *Kuya*. That's way different from yours.

Teofie: It's still about polyaniline. Still about polymers. Still about epoxy. Still about corrosion resistance of steel.

Janus: With nanosilica, *Kuya*. No longer simply about conducting polymers, but about composites.

Teofie: And how can students synthesize nanosilica?

Janus: Ask Zosi. He's their adviser.

Teofie: *(To Zosi)* How?

Zosi: Rice hull ash, Beh.

Teofie: Your paper?

Zosi: I already told you about it. But you told me you don't want to go to nanosilica and composites. You want to stick to polymers.

Teofie: Because I teach Introduction to Polymer Chemistry!

(Baby J's cries louder.)

Esper: *(From inside the apartment)* Dad! Dad! Janus!

Janus: I'm coming! *(Hurriedly enters the apartment.)*

Teofie: You see that? Turned his back at me. In the middle of a conversation. Turned his back. All dirt is rude.

Zosi: Beh, Ma'am Esper called for him.

Teofie: They're in cahoots, Zosi. In cahoots to sabotage my tenure.

(Janus and Esper rush out of the apartment. Janus is carrying the crying Baby J. They run out of the compound.)

Zosi: OMG, Beh. Something bad happened to Baby J.

Teofie: For all you know they're just faking it.

Zosi: How could you say that? They won't use Baby J just to deflect your issue.

Teofie: He used you and your advisees to spite me.

(Teofie goes to the videoke. He plugs it, turns it on. It doesn't turn on. He kicks it repeatedly. Zosi approaches him.)

Zosi: Beh, it was a good proposal.

Teofie: It's impossible for your advisees to come up with a better proposal than mine. Aimee is but another little miss-know-it-all, driven but mediocre. And Mark could barely survive Introduction to Polymer Chemistry.

Zosi: But I guided them, Beh.

Teofie: So? You were just my student.

Zosi: Yes, Beh. And you teach polymers. And your expertise is on polyanilines. Sir Janus already approved my advisees' thesis proposal. They can use the lab now.

Teofie: A mediocre proposal from mediocre students only approved because Janus is sabotaging my tenure.

Zosi: But you can come up with a publishable research article, Beh ... *if* you join their thesis.

Teofie: How dare you to even suggest that.

Zosi: You'll have a better shot at getting your tenure.

Teofie: A student's thesis, Zosi?

Zosi: Which has been granted access to the nanotech lab.

Teofie: I can't. No. It's too humiliating. I can't hitch on an undergrad thesis just to get my tenure.

Zosi: Beh, we had colleagues who already did that.

Teofie: I won't be one of them. I'm different from them, Zosi. I care about my reputation. I care about name.

Zosi: I'm just thinking of ways to help you, Beh. Forget about it.

(Zosi starts to clean up. He starts to cry but hides it from Teofie. Teofie notices that Zosi is crying. He approaches him.)

Teofie: Ok. I will join your advisees' thesis.

Zosi: *(Embraces Teofie)* You'll get your tenure, Beh. You'll get your tenure!

Teofie: But I have to be project leader.

Zosi: Beh, we can't just replace Mark.

Teofie: You're the adviser. Use your power over those students.

Zosi: They can replace me as their adviser.

Teofie: Then don't sign their change of adviser form.

Zosi: But, Beh. You don't have to be project leader. As long as you're a member of a research project, even if it's only a student's thesis, you're allowed to use the lab. And you get to publish whatever you come up with from your experiment.

Teofie: You want me to be a member of a research project proposed by students where I'm not even the project leader?

Zosi: The rules of tenure do not require us to be primary authors, Beh.

Teofie: I will not be able to live with the humiliation, Zosi.

(Pause. Teofie goes in front of the second unit. He picks up the pail of water and pours water on the mound of sand and cement. He starts mixing them once more.)

Zosi: Beh, it's too early for you to be in your construction worker mode.

Teofie: I'd rather be a construction worker than do what you want me to do.

Zosi: You can't tire yourself out, Beh. It may trigger your asthma and your other allergies.

Teofie: Good. Asthma attack. Severe allergic reactions. Then, death. Turn those boxes of

supplements into my coffin. Have my viewing last for two weeks or a month so you may earn a lot from my death.

Zosi: Beh, I'm serious.

Teofie: Do I look like I'm joking, Zosi?

Zosi: You're being sarcastic, Beh.

Teofie: I can no longer give you anything. I'll be completely broke at the end of the sem.

Zosi: I'm not asking you for anything, Beh.

Teofie: When I took you in when you were twelve, you told me you'll do anything for me. Cook for me, clean, wash my clothes, iron them, comb my hair, shine my shoes. You were even willing to carry me so my shoes won't catch dirt.

Zosi: I'm still doing those things for you, Beh.

Teofie: How can you? You no longer have time for me.

Zosi: Beh, my life still revolves around you.

Teofie: I had to order food from the caterer because you weren't able to cook. The cases of beer were delivered, and you weren't here. You came home after I already blew the candles.

Zosi: I told you, Beh. I had to give an exam. No time limit.

Teofie: You scheduled your no-time-limit exam on the day of my birthday.

Zosi: It was a departmental exam, Beh. I wasn't the one who scheduled it.

Teofie: Even in the department, you no longer have time for me.

Zosi: I accompany you to each and every class you teach. I fetch you from each and every classroom you use. There were even times when I joined your class to assist you with your PowerPoint presentations.

Teofie: You already stopped doing all those things.

Zosi: What can I do? We have overlapping classes.

Teofie: You did not allow anything to prevent you before from taking care of me, giving me time. My needs were always your priority. But that was before. When I still had a lot to give. *(Offers shovel to Zosi)* I can only give you my corpse now.

(Pause. Zosi grabs the shovel, returns it on top of the mound.)

Zosi: You're being too dramatic.

Teofie: Because you're not being consistent.

Zosi: What do you want me to do, Beh? Do you want to resign? Do you want me to just follow you around? Oh, no. You want me to carry you, right? *(Tries to lift Teofie)* Where do you want me to take you?

Teofie: *(Pushes Zosi)* Why don't you carry your advisees instead?

Zosi: I no longer know what's really eating you, Beh.

Teofie: You're helping your advisees instead of helping me.

Zosi: Beh, I no longer know what to do. Everything I say, everything I do, everything is wrong. Nothing is right to you.

Teofie: I gave you a roof over your head, Zosi. I shouldered your education. Taught you manners, taught you how to read and write, taught you everything I knew. I molded you into a human being out of the dirt that you were once. And now that I need your help, now that I no longer have anything to give, you became like Janus. You want me to suffer. You want to humiliate me because you and Janus are the same. You can't accept that there are people above you. People on top of the food chain. You want to pull everyone down. Because both of you are but dirt. Dirt!

(Teofie rushes to enter the apartment. Zosie pulls him back.)

Zosi: Just a little amount of humility, Beh. That's all you need. A little humility.

Teofie: Humility is different from outright humiliation.

Zosi: Forget about what people will say. Just focus on getting your tenure, Beh.

Teofie: And have people talk behind my back until I retire from the university?

Zosi: For crying out loud, Beh. You won't be the first faculty member to join an undergraduate group thesis.

Teofie: But I'll be the first faculty member to swallow his pride for a research project which does not even contribute anything new to the field.

Zosi: Nanotechnology, Beh. Everything about it is new.

Teofie: The whole world has already been studying corrosion problem of structural materials since the 1970s. Iron, steel, concrete or any other kind of structural material.

Zosi: But this is different. We won't only be applying epoxy coating on steel. We'll also introduce a protective layer against chloride penetration.

Teofie: Chloride-induced corrosion of steel bars was my master's thesis, Zosi!

Zosi: This is anti-corrosive epoxy coating for steel using Nano-SiO₂-Polyaniline composites. And your expertise in polyaniline and polymers will be useful.

Teofie: And we'll be using your nanosilica?

Zosi: Yes. The one synthesized from rice hull ash. Think of the possibilities, Beh. Its effectiveness may be characterized by using low impedance spectroscopy. We can determine its coating capacitance and its coating resistance. We can come up with a marketable product, apply for patent, and pray that the construction industry will

boom so we'll all get rich. You'll get your tenure, Beh. And you'll be able to make the Orgullo compound as competitive as you want it to be because of our patent.

Teofie: Nanosilica and polyaniline are two different particles.

Zosi: That's where you'll come in, Beh. Polymer composites by combining two different particles. Nanosilica and polyaniline as conducting polymer. Polymer, Beh. *Compound*. Isn't it poetic?

Teofie: You don't need to lecture me on polymers, Zosi.

Zosi: Sorry, Beh. Sorry. I got excited.

Teofie: Why don't we do it on our own? We can submit another proposal to Janus.

Zosi: Beh, he already approved the undergraduate group thesis.

Teofie: I have to get my tenure with my own work, with my own name.

Zosi: Think polymer, Beh. Think of a compound. Different particles coming together. Like different people with different situations. The two of us, Beh. Together with the students. Helping one another because life is not only about one person, not only about being on your own, not only about one situation. Life is not a monomer, Beh.

Teofie: Are you falling for Mark?

Zosi: What kind of a question is that?

Teofie: You gave him your yet to be published research on nanosilica from rice hull ash, Zosi.

Zosi: Because he's my advisee.

Teofie: And you talk about applying for a patent. You risked your chances for a patent now that you gave your research to your advisees. What if one of them leaks it? What if

Janus tweaks it and applies for it to be patented under his name? You very well know how it is with patents. It doesn't matter if you were the first who did the research, what matters is if you were the first who applied for it to be patented. No, you won't risk your chances for a patent if you don't see Mark as someone who's more than your advisee.

Zosi: Beh, do you hear yourself? You're not only being irrational. You're being paranoid, Beh. Paranoid.

Teofie: Polymer, monomer. All of you are the same. You latched on me until you corroded everything I got. But I still have my name, Zosi. And I won't allow any dirt like you to corrode the dignity of my name. I am an Orgullo.

(Teofie enters his unit. He immediately shuts the door. Locks it. Zosi tries to open it. He repeatedly knocks.)

Zosi: *(Crying)* Beh! Beh! Please, Beh! Beh!

(Esper enters. She sees Zosi. Pause. Esper approaches Zosi, leads him to her apartment. They enter the apartment. Closes the door behind them. Lights slowly fades.)

ACT II

Façade of three apartment units. In front of Janus' unit, we now see a table with children's party food: colorful sandwiches, cupcakes, cabbage with sticks of hotdogs and marshmallows, etc. There are several party chairs with balloons tied to them: "Happy 2nd Birthday, Baby J!" Zosi's bag rests on one of the chairs.

We now see a huge rectangular sandbox where the mound of sand and cement is placed in Act I. The sandbox has a sandcastle, a small steel shovel, and a small pail of water.

In front of Teofie's unit, we now see several huge garbage bags filled with trash, old and rusty small appliances like toaster, kettle, rice cooker, etc. The old videoke is still there.

We see Zosi and Esper standing on two separate chairs, hanging a string of letter cutouts on the window of Janus' apartment: Happy 2nd Birthday, Baby J!

Zosi: OMG, I was right. You'll celebrate Baby J's birthday in your cute, cozy home.

Esper: My *Ate* was offering the clubhouse in their subdivision. But you know your Sir Janus. "*My child, my party, my home.*" (*Laughs*) We can't fit my *Ate* and her five kids in our guest room. They had to check in a hotel. We left Baby J with them so we can prepare for the party.

Zosi: I really, really miss Baby J, Ma'am Esper.

Esper: You know you're always welcome to visit us anytime you want.

Zosi: I've been trying to stay away, Ma'am.

(Pause. They continue hanging the letter cutouts. They get off the chairs. Esper looks at the letter cutouts. Zosi gets his camera from his bag. He positions Esper for a picture with the letter cutouts. Takes her picture.)

Zosi: (*Shows camera*) Of course, I'm very prepared to be the official photographer of Baby J's birthday party.

Esper: (*Laughs*) You really bought a camera for this?

Zosi: I saved up. (*Raises camera*) Gift for myself. (*Shows Esper her picture*) Gift for Baby J.

Esper: A cellphone cam will do.

Zosi: But the pictures will have better quality if we use this, Ma'am.

Esper: Your presence is more than enough gift, Zosi.

Zosi: I don't want Baby J to grow up then look at his low-quality 2nd birthday party pictures and think that his *Ninang Zosi* is cheap.

Esper: *(Laughs)* Oh, you really are so adorable, Zosi. It didn't surprise me when Jasper and Janella made me swear to have you here when they come home for Baby J's birthday.

Zosi: At first, I really didn't want to come, Ma'am. But they've been messaging me. So I thought, what the heck? Be brave, Zosi. Be brave for your friends.

Esper: You haven't really talked to him ever since ...

(Pause. Zosi goes to the sandbox. He starts playing with the sand.)

Zosi: This is a wonderful idea, Ma'am Esper.

Esper: Zosi ...

Zosi: The kids will certainly love this.

Esper: It's never easy to forget someone you once loved.

Zosi: *(Gets a lump of sand and looks while sand falls in between his fingers)* I used to love doing this when I was a child. We used to live near the sea. All squatters. But I didn't care. I would help fishermen ready their boats, then I'd play with sand. Look, much like rain. So beautiful. I don't want them to stop from falling. But they'll always stop. Gone.

Esper: He used to go out before. Run errands, attend his classes. But after he did not get his tenure, I seldom see him get out of his apartment.

Zosi: I wanted to approach him whenever I'd see him in the department before. I wanted to comb his hair. Fix his clothes. When I was passing by his unit a while ago, *(chuckles)* I wanted to throw away the garbage, clean the whole area. But I stopped.

I knew he stopped caring about me. And honestly, I'm not sure what I feel for him now or if I still feel anything for him. Perhaps, whatever we felt for each other, it's all gone. Just like falling rain or sand. Just like that. Gone.

(Silence. Esper approaches Zosi, embraces him. Janus comes out of the apartment, carrying a chocolate fountain. He places the chocolate fountain on the table.)

Janus: We have a party, people. No drama.

Esper: We're lucky Zosi's with us, Dad. He's been helping me with the decorations.

Zosi: *(Positions Janus)* And before anything else, let's take your picture first, Sir.

Janus: *(Poses)* You're truly prepared, ha?

Zosi: Of course, Sir. I don't want to hear Janella say my pictures look cheap after I saw her gorgeous pictures on Instagram.

Esper: How can you compete with her? She's a graphic designer.

Janus: Why not compete with Jasper?

Zosi: He seldom posts pictures.

Janus: *(Laughs)* Exactly my point. Just like me. A certified lab rat.

Esper: *(To Janus)* Hey, lab rat. Have you already experimented with the spaghetti?

Janus: I'm still working on this fountain.

Esper: I thought you said you were to multitask?

Janus: I didn't know this is very difficult to work on.

Esper: *(Teasingly)* You'll really handle the food while I handle the decorations and games, ha?

Janus: You cheated. You didn't tell me you'll have Zosimo as import.

Zosi: I can help you prepare the food, Sir.

Esper: He's too proud, Zosi.

Janus: I'm trying to hold on to my pride.

Esper: *(To Zosi)* He can't fail. He has a bet with *Ate*.

Janus: I almost forgot. You have to help me. I don't want to dress up as a clown later if I lose on our bet.

Esper: *(Laughs)* Yes, yes. I'll help you. I don't want you dressing up as clown. You're not funny. You'll only bore the children.

(Esper enters the apartment.)

Janus: *(To Zosi)* Tell me. Am I not a funny guy?

Zosi: Do you want to be a clown, Sir?

Janus: *(Refers to the fountain)* Let's just work on this. How do I even make this thing run?

Zosi: *(Fixes the fountain)* It's quite easy, Sir. *(The fountain starts running)* See? There you go! The children will surely love this.

Janus: You're showing off your expertise on electrical conductivity, Zosimo.

Zosi: You really are not funny, Sir.

Janus: *(Chuckles)* Yes, I'm the serious type. Pensive. *(Poses)* The mysterious frat man.

Zosi: Still not funny, Sir.

Janus: *(Chuckles)* Yes, I'm hopeless. Must be because of reading all those research project proposals. Everyone wants to be in nanotechnology. *(Touches belly)* See this? Not beer belly. This is sitting belly.

Zosi: Ok, Sir. That's a little bit funny.

(Janus and Zosi laugh a little.)

Janus: Eight to five, Zosi. Just sitting behind my desk. Reading all those proposals. But when I read yours, I didn't go beyond the title. I approved it immediately.

Zosi: Sir, I am more than willing to help you win your bet with Ma'am Esper's *Ate*. You don't need to flatter me. I'm with team Sir Janus all the way.

Janus: No, I'm serious. Not funny, remember?

Zosi: I was a nervous wreck when I was writing that proposal. I thought you'd want to give others a chance. But eventually, I just went on with it and submitted it.

Janus: Research is not a one-shot deal, Zosimo. We need continuity. And I'm proud to be part of the makings of the nanosilica from rice hull ash king.

Zosi: Sir, you keep on forgetting. Rice ash hull *queen*. (*Sings and dances*) "Cause I'm the queen of the night, the queen of the night, oh yeah, oh yeah, just say it, say it, say it, 'cause I'm the queen of the night." I'm very ready to entertain the kids, Sir. I can be the clown.

Janus: Without Madonna's songs?

Zosi: Even without Madonna's songs.

Janus: You're no longer a Madonna fan?

Zosi: As much as possible, I'm trying to forget Madonna. I want to focus on Baby J's birthday.

Janus: You should be throwing your own party. Your proposal is truly impressive. "Effect of nanosilica from rice hull ash on the conductivity of cement paste." That's one sure ball publication for you. Another step toward being known as the nanosilica from rice hull ash *queen*.

Zosi: It's really my dream, Sir. I didn't want my master's thesis on synthesizing nanosilica from rice hull ash to go to waste.

Janus: Your advisees won the best thesis award last year, right?

Zosi: Because of your huge help, Sir.

Janus: It really was a promising research, Zosimo. The nanotech program was glad to be of help.

Zosi: At first I thought they may not finish it in time for their graduation. Thank God, there were several faculty members who rescued the thesis.

Janus: Well, it got them excited. They upgraded the thesis, and you had your publication.

Zosi: I was really so overwhelmed Sir, when they wanted to study all combinations of varying concentrations of nanosilica and polyanilines. I thought, OMG. What if our hypothesis is proven wrong? What if polymer composites from nano-fillers can't really be used as anti-corrosion? If it was just an undergraduate thesis, we'll only look for the potential. But when it was upgraded to a full-blown research project, I really got scared.

Janus: Trial and error, Zosimo. That's what experiments are all about. You were so kind to share your project with the other faculty members. You could have just taken all the credit for yourself, but you shared it with the others. No lead author, no project leader on paper.

Zosi: Sir, (*sings from "All By Myself"*) "... don't wanna be, all by myself." I didn't want to be all by myself, Sir. What if I break any of the equipment for the complex impedance spectroscopy? I only received a four-thousand peso raise from the last

promotion cycle. I won't be able to pay for any of the equipment in the nanotech lab!

Janus: Actually, I'm thoroughly inspecting each equipment, Zosimo. I need to be certain you did not break anything.

Zosi: Sir, don't scare me!

(Janus and Zosi laugh. Pause. Janus lights a cigarette stick, starts smoking. Zosi starts to take pictures.)

Janus: You know, they approved my request to have an item for a research assistant.

Zosi: I read the announcement, Sir.

Janus: You can fill it up for me since your proposal has already been approved. *(Points to Teofie's apartment)* You can take him in.

Zosi: I'm not so sure, Sir.

Janus: Still ignoring you?

Zosi: No contact since he kicked me out.

Janus: He no longer speaks to us, too. Doesn't even look at us. Only leaves acknowledgment receipt of rental payment on our doorstep. I don't even know if he's still eating or if he still takes a bath.

Zosi: I'm just glad he's still alive, Sir. He may be miserable, but at least he's still alive.

Janus: *(Points at second unit)* No more renovations. I don't know how he survives with our rent alone.

Zosi: He's been selling his things, Sir.

Janus: Really?

Zosi: On facebook pages mostly.

Janus: With his name?

Zosi: He uses different accounts.

Janus: Oh, well. At least I'm still paying rent. In the end, the compound still supports him.

Zosi: He's still not selling the compound?

Janus: He'll never sell this compound.

Zosi: I told you once that I love him because I respect him. That's one of the reasons why I respect him, Sir. People may find him intransigent or plain arrogant. But I find him principled. No matter how desperate he may be, he'll stand by what he believes in.

Janus: And those principles are making him miserable now.

Zosi: How can we blame him, Sir? Problems came to him all at once. Problems with his investment on networking, problems with his tenure, problems with the compound.

Janus: Problems with his half-brother.

Zosi: Problems with his lover. He's not used to facing problems, Sir.

(Teofie comes out of his apartment. He carries a full garbage bag with him. Janus and Zosi look at him. Teofie glances at them. He places the garbage bag with the other garbage bags. He goes inside his apartment and closes the door.)

Janus: *(Sings from Madonna's "You Must Love Me")* "Where do we go from here? This isn't where we intended to be, we had it all, you believed in me, I believed in you."

Zosi: You said you weren't a fan of Madonna.

Janus: It's your Ma'am Esper's *Ate*. Keeps on playing Madonna's songs whenever we visit her.

(Pause.)

Zosi: He looks shabby, Sir. Lost weight.

Janus: Why don't you talk to him?

Zosi: I'm afraid he'll just ignore me again.

Janus: Tell him you want to hire him as a research assistant.

Zosi: He'll be insulted, Sir.

Janus: We'll never know until you try.

Zosi: I don't know, Sir. I pity him. But I don't know if I want to help him or if I can really help him. You were right. When it comes to helping someone, we can never be fully certain if what we're rendering is genuine help or something else.

Janus: Trial and error, Zosimo. Trial and error.

(Janus goes inside his unit. Zosi fixes himself. He starts approaching Teofie's unit. Stops. Goes back in front of Janus' unit. Pauses. Janus suddenly opens the door.)

Janus: Trial and error.

Zosi: Sir!

(Janus closes the door while chuckling. Zosi slowly goes to Teofie's unit. Pauses. He hesitates once more. Then he starts to knock at the door.)

Zosi: Beh? Beh? Beh?

Teofie: *(From inside the unit)* Go away!

Zosi: Beh!

Teofie: *(From inside the unit)* Leave me alone!

Zosi: *(Knocks harder)* Beh! Beh! Beh!

Teofie: *(From inside the unit)* Stay away from me! Stay away! Stay away!

Zosi: *(Sings from Madonna's "Take a Bow")* "Say your lines but do you feel them, do you mean what you say when there's no one around (no one around), watching you, watching me, one lonely star, (one lonely star you don't know who you are), I've always been in love with you, (always with you), I guess you've always known it's true (you know it's true), you took my love for granted, why oh why, the show is over say good-bye."

(Pause. Zosi looks at the door for a while. Then, slowly he turns to leave. As he leaves, he hears Teofie singing.)

Teofie: *(From inside the unit; sings from Madonna's "Borderline")* "You caused me so much pain, I think I'm going insane, what does it take to make you see? You just keep on pushin' my love over the borderline (borderline), keep pushin' me, keep pushin' me, keep pushin' my love."

Zosi: *(Sings with much gusto, from Madonna's "Frozen")* "You only see what your eyes want to see, how can life be what you want it to be? You're frozen when your heart's not open, you're so consumed with how much you get, you waste your time with hate and regret, you're broken, when your heart's not open, mmm mmm mmm if I could melt your heart."

Teofie: *(From inside the unit; sings from Madonna's "You Must Love Me")* "Deep in my heart I'm concealing, things that I'm longing to say, scared to confess what I'm feeling, frightened you'll slip away, you must love me, you must love me, you must love me."

Zosi: *(Sings from Cindy Lauper's "Time After Time")* "If you're lost you can look and you will find me, time after time, if you fall, I will catch you, I'll be waiting, time

after time, if you're lost, you can look and you will find me, time after time, if you fall, I will catch you, I will be waiting, time after time."

(Teofie suddenly opens the door.)

Teofie: That's Cindy Lauper, not Madonna.

(Zosi embraces Teofie. Kisses him on the lips. They kiss for a while.)

Zosi: *(Fixes Teofie's hair)* Have you eaten, Beh? Your clothes clean? Do you need anything? How are you, Beh? How are you?

Teofie: *(Moves away)* Abandoned by you.

Zosi: Beh, I serenaded you numerous times. During your classes. In your office. While you were walking home. You never even looked at me.

Teofie: So, you have another research project.

Zosi: You heard me talking to Sir Janus.

Teofie: I felt like you both wanted me to hear it.

Zosi: It's up your alley, Beh.

Teofie: Electrical conductivity?

Zosi: Yes, Beh. It's very important in industrial coatings. You very well know that if it becomes too low, overspray losses increase. But if conductivity is too high, the surface properties are affected because the particles which are charged have the tendency to bond together. *(Tries to be charming)* Like with two people, Beh. If their love for each other is highly charged, whatever happens, they'll stick together. Like us.

(Zosi tries to kiss Teofie but Teofie moves away.)

Teofie: So, what's to be done?

Zosi: The usual. Nanosilica synthesized from rice hull ash.

Teofie: You're addicted to nanosilica?

Zosi: It's already my research agenda.

Teofie: And what are you to do with nanosilica now?

Zosi: We'll see if there's a relation between the electrical conductivity of simulated cement paste matrixes mixed with nanosilica and the effect of hydration stages in ions.

Teofie: Janus approved that very simple research?

Zosi: Not that simple, Beh. The hydration stages of ions have to be dissociated from the capillary pore solution of the cement paste's mesostructure. Those mesostructure pores are tricky, Beh. You know how they are. Like open pores on the face. If they get big, dirt may penetrate them. That's why we need to refine the mesostructure pores, so they won't be penetrated by chloride and sulfate which destroy concrete.

Teofie: And why would I join that research project?

Zosi: Beh, we can fabricate nanosilica now from silicon-containing biomass materials for thermal energy efficiency. Polymers, once more Beh. Polymers.

Teofie: You'll make me project leader now?

Zosi: It's not that simple, Beh.

Teofie: So you're just here to insult me again.

Zosi: Beh, we need to study the increase in ions once the hydration process sets in. We need to see if there's an increasing trend in conductivity spectra, we need to conduct complex impedance spectroscopy. Then, we have to study the frequency and use Kramers-Kronig. It's already Physics and Engineering, Beh. Not only

chemistry.

Teofie: And why can't I be project leader when both of us are into chemistry?

Zosi: Because we'll be using nanosilica from rice hull ash, Beh.

Teofie: If you want to lure me back to the university, make me project leader.

Zosi: But I won't be able to convince the other team members, Beh.

Teofie: Then, replace them.

Zosi: Beh, if I get you for this project, even as a member, as a research assistant, I'll have to beg the other team members to accept you. They don't really like you that much, Beh.

Teofie: Those ingrates. I'm sure most if not all of them were previous tenants of this compound. I still have Mommy's records on delinquent tenants, those who literally knelt before her because they couldn't pay rent on time. Tell me who are those members. I'll slap them with Mommy's records. I'm sure their names are included in Mommy's records.

Zosi: Most of them are quite young, Beh. Too young to have been tenants of this compound.

Teofie: Then, choose.

Zosi: Beh?

Teofie: Me or those too young to have been tenants of this compound?

Zosi: There's no choosing, Beh. The proposal has already been approved. I cannot get rid of them because a possible research assistant wants to be project leader.

Teofie: Then use your power as project leader.

Zosi: But we need them in the team. We're not physicists or engineers.

Teofie: Go to the Department of Physics and the College of Engineering and get other physicists and engineers.

Zosi: It won't be that easy, Beh. The team members also contributed to the proposal.

Teofie: So what? The proposal has already been approved. They already got credit for the proposal. They can already use it as points for promotion.

Zosi: They want the publication, Beh.

Teofie: Who cares about what they want?

Zosi: But, Beh. It's an interdisciplinary project.

Teofie: Then withdraw your nanosilica from rice hull ash from that project.

Zosi: Beh, don't feign ignorance. You know it's not how research projects are executed.

Teofie: This is not the first time members of a research project are to be replaced.

Zosi: But, Beh –

Teofie: Stop calling me, "Beh."

(Teofie opens the door to the unit, Zosi rushes to close the door.)

Zosi: You need this research project. You need this job.

Teofie: I am surviving without a project and without a job.

Zosi: By selling your things online.

Teofie: Stop stalking me.

Zosi: How many things do you have left? *(Picks up the appliances one by one)* Who's going to buy this online? How much can you sell this for? Where are you going to sell this? Junkyard? How long can you live like this? Look at yourself. Look at your house. Look at your whole compound. Everything looks like dirt.

Teofie: So you're admitting it?

Zosi: What do you want me to admit?

Teofie: You came back to hire me as research assistant because you still want to humiliate me. You want to toy with me. You and Janus. You wanted me to hear your conversation. You wanted to excite me. You wanted me to salivate over the possibility of getting a job. You wanted me to act desperate. To be pathetic so people will laugh at me. When will you be done with me, Zosi?

Zosi: God, you're hopeless, Teofie. You're simply hopeless.

(Zosi starts to head back to Janus' unit.)

Teofie: Yes, leave me now that I'm hopeless. Leave me now when I no longer comprehend what's happening around me, what's happening to me.

Zosi: I no longer know how to help you. I no longer know what you need, what you want. I no longer know you, Teofie.

Teofie: You'll never know me. You weren't born into my world. I grew up with servants. I grew up witnessing Mommy and Daddy ordering those servants around. The whole town knew them, respected them, were frightened of them. Even the mayor, Zosi. The priests, businessmen, policemen, everyone. Under their beck and call.

Zosi: You no longer have servants now. The mayor does not even know you exist. You can't even afford to own a dog. Deal with it. *(Continues to walk toward Janus' apartment).*

Teofie: You think I did this to myself? That I wanted this? That I was to blame? Did you care for parents undergoing dialysis and chemotherapy? Do you know the toll long illnesses have over those who take care of the sick? What do you know about losing servants one by one? About being snubbed by people you once helped? About

people who used to line up to you, knelt before you, begged you, then started to stay away from you like you have a despicable contagious disease? After I lost Mommy and Daddy, I no longer wanted to live. Not because I wanted to die but because I no longer knew how to live. I tried. God knows I tried. But I felt so alone. You were wrong. No, I am not hopeless. I'm helpless.

(Teofie cries. Zosi takes pity on him. Zosi approaches Teofie and consoles him.)

Zosi: I'm still here.

Teofie: Then, make me the project leader.

Zosi: God, Teofie. Drop it. You yourself say you're already helpless.

Teofie: I'm telling you the kind of help I need.

Zosi: I can't give it to you.

Teofie: You used to say you love me because you respect me. Show me that respect. Don't make me suffer from humiliation.

Zosi: You already humiliated yourself, Zosi. Look at you.

(Zosi leaves Teofie. Heads toward Janus' apartment. Teofie suddenly pulls Zosi's hair.)

Teofie: Ingrate! Damned you. Ingrate!

(Zosi turns around and slaps Teofie.)

Zosi: You entitled son of a bitch!

Teofie: *(Slaps Zosi)* My mother is not a bitch!

Zosi: *(Slaps Teofie)* You don't have the right to hurt me!

Teofie: You owe me everything you have, everything you are!

(Teofie pushes Zosi to the sandbox. Zosi grabs Teofie and pulls him down the sandbox. They wrestle.)

Teofie: Son of a bitch!

Zosi: Your mother was insane!

Teofie: Take it back, dirt!

(Janus and Esper rush out of the apartment. They try to separate Teofie and Zosi.)

Esper: Stop it, please. Stop it.

(Esper is able to pull Zosi. Janus is able to pull Teofie. Zosi embraces Esper, crying. Esper takes Zosi to their apartment.)

Teofie: Ingrates! All of you are ingrates!

(Janus hits Teofie on the face. Teofie runs to his apartment. Janus is about to enter his own apartment, but Teofie comes out of his apartment carrying an open tin can full of cash – both bills and coins. He scoops some cash and throw them at Janus.)

Teofie: One year rental!

(Silence. They look at each other. Janus turns his back at Teofie and heads to his unit. Teofie throws the chocolate fountain to the ground.)

Teofie: Ingrate!

(Janus pins Teofie on the table.)

Janus: I no longer know what to do with you!

(Esper and Zosi rush out of the apartment.)

Esper: *(To Janus)* Baby J's having convulsions.

Janus: What?

Esper: We have to leave now. Our baby, Janus. Our baby.

(Esper and Janus rush to leave to compound.)

Teofie: Yes, leave! Leave and don't come back!

(Pause. Zosi is looking at Teofie. Teofie notices him.)

Teofie: Why are you still here? Leave, you ingrate. Go with them, you dirt!

Zosi: How does corrosion feel, Teofie?

Teofie: Get lost! You're a trespasser. Get lost!

Zosi: I tried to be like nanosilica, Teofie. I tried to prevent corrosion.

Teofie: You want to talk about corrosion? I had everything you can only dream of. And I lost them all because there's so much *dirt* in this world.

Zosi: You're forgetting something. Corrosion happens not only because of dirt.

Corrosion also happens because of how steel *reacts* to dirt.

(Zosi hurriedly goes out of the compound. Teofie attempts to run after him. Stops himself. Gets a garbage bag, throws at Zosi's direction.)

Teofie: Dirt! Dirt!

(Pause. Teofie looks at the mess in his compound. He looks at the videoke. He tries to turn the videoke on but it does not turn on. He repeatedly kicks the videoke while singing Madonna's "You'll See.")

Teofie: *I have truth on my side*

You only have deceit

You'll see, somehow, someday

(He stops kicking the videoke. He starts to cry.)

Teofie: *All by myself*

I don't need anyone at all

I know I'll survive

I know I'll stay alive

(Pause. Teofie looks around. Repeatedly inhales. He starts to look determined, sings on top of his lungs.)

Teofie: *I'll stand on my own*

I won't need anyone this time

It will be mine

No one can take it from me

You'll see

(Suddenly, the dangling iron sheet of the second unit crashes down. Lights off.)

END