

# Helgi Comes Apart

Tyrfingur Tyrfingsson

**English Translation**

**Elís Gunnarsdóttir**

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## Characters

Helgi

Jón

Katrín

The Baker

The Little Girl

/ indicates that the speaker is cut off by another character

1.

***helgi comes apart***



2.

*helgi comes apart*

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## mortuary

*Helgi is clearing ashes out of the cremator. He sweeps the remains into an urn, and turns to face the body of Kristmundur, lying on a table nearby. Kristmundur's mouth is agape, his jaws locked by the onset of rigor mortis. For a while, Helgi struggles unsuccessfully to close the corpse's mouth. Kristmundur's chest cavity has been cut open, but the void is currently concealed by a white sheet. Two neckties are draped over Helgi's shoulder. He is startled when he notices Katrín, who has quietly slipped into the room. Helgi holds each tie up to Kristmundur's face, and asks:*

HELGI: White or blue?

KATRÍN: Maybe you should sew his chest back up before picking a tie. Are you trying to match it to his heart?

HELGI: You knew this guy?

KATRÍN: Obviously. Did you think I was here to see you?

*Short pause.*

HELGI: White tie or blue tie?

3.

***helgi comes apart***

KATRÍN: You pick.

HELGI: I'll leave it to my dad. He should be here in three minutes. Probably best you speak to him.

*Katrín removes the sheet from Kristmundur's chest. She is visibly nauseous.*

HELGI: The smell is pretty normal, but it's good we're cremating him today.

KATRÍN: I think he always smelled like this.

HELGI: Oh yeah?

KATRÍN: I didn't exactly know him.

HELGI: You have to know the body to be allowed to view it.

KATRÍN: I mean he was my dad, I just didn't really know him – is that so hard to understand?

HELGI: No.

KATRÍN: Can't you close his mouth?

HELGI: Soon as my dad gets here. Usually a two-man job.

KATRÍN: Will I get some kind of disease if I lay my head on his chest for a little while?

HELGI: Hope not.

KATRÍN: He's so cold.

HELGI: I guess it's because he's so dead.

KATRÍN: And he looks so angry, look how angry he is, clenching his fists. You can fix that too, right?

HELGI: I can't exactly fix how the man was feeling when he died.

KATRÍN: No? You told me you were the best mortician in the business...

HELGI: I'm actually going to wait outside.

KATRÍN: I'm sorry. I've never been sad before, I usually prefer to be annoyed.

HELGI: I hear you.

KATRÍN: But do I look sad? Because really I feel... nothing.

HELGI: I don't know /

KATRÍN: Do you think I should have let him follow me on Instagram? He sent me a request. Okay, now I'm feeling it, now I'm sad. Or. Maybe I'm just acting. Yeah, I'm only sad the way my mom is sad, she's actually sad all the time, gets discounts and all sorts of free stuff out of it. I'm playing my mom when my mom is sad. Or like, playing Sally Field.

HELGI: Great actress.

KATRÍN: She's heartbreaking. I'm not sad.

HELGI: You didn't even know him. Hard to grieve for someone who you don't even really know, even if he was your dad.

KATRÍN: Okay, now I'm sad. So annoying. I saw him at a gas station this summer and I ducked down behind the peanuts so he wouldn't see me. A thirty-year-old woman, hiding like a little kid...

HELGI: Being around your parents always turns you back into a little kid. He should have done more to fix your relationship.

KATRÍN: I was pretty fat when I was little, and I always thought that's why he didn't ever try, but of course it wasn't because of that...

HELGI: No. Men like... Like your dad. You might think they're bad people, but when it comes down to it, they're only lazy and disrespectful. They're not evil. Maybe they really wanted to get you something for your birthday, but they thought all the toys were too overpriced. And they were going to build you something themselves, but then they just can't be bothered. Can't make the effort to find a hammer and nails. So they don't, but they always feel guilty about it when they're hung over.

KATRÍN: Thanks, you're being very kind. When we... were hanging out the other day, you weren't this kind.

HELGI: I'm playing my dad when my dad's being kind. And he's only ever kind to sad people.

KATRÍN: So I'm sad people?

HELGI: Yes.

KATRÍN: Not a cranky bitch?

HELGI: No.

KATRÍN: Okay. Except now I'm not feeling... anything again. What's it like when they bury somebody?

HELGI: I've never actually gone to a funeral... except for work.

KATRÍN: Right.

HELGI: The priest makes a speech about what the person's life was like. Or wait, was Kristmundur Christian?

KATRÍN: I don't know, what do you think?

HELGI: Well yeah, judging by the name.

KATRÍN: Yes, totally. And what does the priest say?

HELGI: You're just going to find out at the funeral.

KATRÍN: I'm not coming. I just wanted to see him for a minute, have my own little advance funeral, like a sneak preview. So: What does the priest say?

HELGI: He'll say: Kristmundur was born and raised ...

KATRÍN: Where was he raised?

HELGI: I don't know.

KATRÍN: Just make up a story.

HELGI: My dad is like, almost here.

KATRÍN: I promise I'll believe it's true.

HELGI: Kristmundur was born in the rocky hills of /

KATRÍN: Ew, are we hillbillies?

HELGI: I mean, Kristmundur was a true cosmopolitan /

KATRÍN: What does that even mean?

HELGI: Your cheek's not getting cold?

KATRÍN: No. Keep going.

HELGI: Kristmundur was a man of outstanding moral fiber/

KATRÍN: He was a criminal.

HELGI: Kristmundur was no slave to the establishment/

KATRÍN: Just say he was on welfare. All Icelandic criminals are piss-poor, they all end up with nothing. I'm inheriting a set of Japanese kitchen knives and a KFC gift card.

HELGI: Kristmundur had a life-long passion for fine dining /

KATRÍN: Don't joke around, that's really annoying.

HELGI: Sorry.

KATRÍN: Then what happens?

HELGI: They throw dirt on the coffin.

KATRÍN: Is there singing?

HELGI: Yeah.

KATRÍN: What do they sing?

HELGI: What do you want to hear?

KATRÍN: Something nice.

HELGI: Uh. His friends /

KATRÍN: You mean the other criminals?

HELGI: Yeah they sort of asked for this song... *Candy maaan... Oh the candy man can, 'cause he mixes it with love and makes the world taste good.* It's dumb but they wanted to lighten the mood. They're in right now, these like, joke songs.

KATRÍN: Could they get someone to perform it, to make it sound nice?

HELGI: Think they were just going to play it off their phone.

KATRÍN: Maybe you could sing it?

HELGI: No, I /

KATRÍN: When we... were hanging out the other day you wouldn't stop talking about how /

HELGI: Yeah but I was so drunk that time, I don't remember it at all /

KATRÍN: Said you were a mortician. You talked about it forever, about cake make-up and about some baker? And then you said you wished you could be a funeral singer instead. And then I said, whenever somebody calls me something, I become that thing. I was on the phone with my dad once and he said my hair was blonde, so I bleached my hair. Once a teacher called me Rochelle and right away I was like: “Yep, that name is so me!” But my real name is/

HELGI: Katrín. I remember.

KATRÍN: You just say you are a funeral singer, you become a funeral singer. I don’t think that’s asking too much...

HELGI: See, for me, it’s enough to just think about doing something new. Plan it all out, and then I feel like I’ve almost kind of done it. Right now, I’m planning to go to Home Depot. And that’s already enough. I don’t ever have to go. It’s not like I’m really shopping anyway when I go to Home Depot. I’m more like, planning stuff and speculating and /

KATRÍN: Alright, this is really making me sad. It’s your call: How do you want my story to go? “At my dad’s funeral, this middle-aged tweaker played Sammy Davis Jr. off his cellphone.” Or: “At my dad’s funeral, my friend got up and sang a song, he took care of everything, that’s the story of how we got to know each other.”

HELGI: No, Katrín I just can’t /

KATRÍN: But then I’ll definitely come.

*Jón bursts into the mortuary, making an ungodly amount of noise and fuss. He is a robust man, out of breath and unusually agitated.*

JÓN: (*calling out*) Are you alive Helgi? Answer me! Helgi?

HELGI: I'm dead...

JÓN: I caused a riot at the walk-in clinic this morning. I looked that doctor straight in the eye and I said: You either take me off these pills, you take out my goddamn colon, or I take my own life! Now what'll it be! I just said it, did it, no hesitation. I'd rather live the rest of my life with a stoma bag, Helgi, instead of living with this pain, like a rat deep inside my gut trying to claw its way out, Helgi, like a thousand writhing larvae hatching from their eggs and wriggling inside of me, this is no way to live /

HELGI: You're late.

JÓN: Are you not hearing this? One thousand writhing /

HELGI: Yesterday it was your foot. You were going to saw it off. How is your foot today?

JÓN: Good as new!

HELGI: This is Katrín. You two speak to each other and I'll /

KATRÍN: I'd rather talk to you Helgi than a thousand rats...

JÓN: (*Inspecting Kristmundur's body*) I don't mind leaving you kids alone. I just thought that Katrín here might want to speak to someone that knew her father.

KATRÍN: You didn't know him at all.

JÓN: No? We took a class together at the Tantric Institute downtown, and then there was the week we spent together at a nudist colony by the Black Sea – matter of fact, I got a few pictures of that trip here on my phone /

KATRÍN: Hard pass.

JÓN: You see, folks over there in the Balkans are just like the homosexuals, they go wild for us Scandinavian gentlemen.

*Jón gives the corpse a hearty slap on the stomach.*

KATRÍN: Is this going to be the tone at the funeral?

HELGI: Of course not.

JÓN: Oh no? Thing is, his friends ripped me off, they didn't mention 'til the last minute that the funeral was going to be paid for with three frozen legs of lamb and a flatscreen TV. I don't even watch television. See, your daddy's tale was a real sad story, died penniless, no possessions besides a rusty Peugeot and two parakeets. So we're not making a penny out of this. Little Katie, you owe me and your best friend here a funeral.

HELGI: I don't understand why you're so late, he's never late, what the hell's going on?

JÓN: Something happened to me, you won't believe this. I was real worked up after the clinic so I went straight to the Pearl, no big deal but anyway I'm at the Pearl, head upstairs and I've been avoiding sugar lately, completely off the sugar, and off the pastries as well but then what do you know, suddenly I get this craving (*chuckles*) this craving for an ice cream cone and I just can't control myself you see I was so worked up and so, I'm up there in the food court at the Pearl, where they have the little ice cream stand or whatever over there and what do you know? They started selling italian ice cream! You knew about this? Real italian gelato, thirty different flavors and you can taste as many as you like. Always free to taste. Got these disposable spoons, little plastic ones you know, so you can taste each flavor and I'm a little afraid to admit it but kids: I tasted them all, thirty little spoons of thirty kinds of gelato, well some of it was sorbet which is only ice really, a real zing on the palate and just perfect if you're trying to avoid dairy, and then I got myself a single scoop of Bailey's ice cream but it didn't go down so well, alcohol has never agreed with me, so immediately I felt my colon /

HELGI: You just came from there?

JÓN: Yes, I was just over there.

HELGI: But the Pearl doesn't open for another hour.

JÓN: They changed the opening times, place is crawling with tourists these days.

HELGI: They sell ice cream at nine in the morning?

JÓN: Katie /

HELGI: Why are you lying about this?

JÓN: Why are you attacking me like this?

HELGI: What did you do?

JÓN: I'm terribly anxious, Helgi.

HELGI: About what?

JÓN: I've been made aware of some information which /

HELGI: You went to a psychic?

JÓN: Psychic? No, no, no, no, no, no, no.

HELGI: You went to a psychic, spent your money on a fortune teller instead of  
paying me, you owe me about /

JÓN: I did no such thing!

HELGI: That better be the truth.

*Pause.*

JÓN: I had my own premonition.

HELGI: Oh come on.

JÓN: Totally free of charge. A premonition in three parts. And son, I didn't like  
what I saw.

HELGI: We have a client with us right now.

KATRÍN: I'm going to take my dad elsewhere, I can't listen to this /

JÓN: No funeral home in town will take a ten-day-old, bankrupt corpse off your hands. Your daddy always did say you were difficult. Now, Helgi needs to be left alone for a few days. You're just going to do your job, Helgi my boy, relax, and then everything's going to be peachy.

HELGI: The baker says these premonitions are your way of playing God.

JÓN: Endless goddamn negativity from this baker.

HELGI: You're late for your water aerobics class.

JÓN: I'm feeling very strange and then I realize I'm falling into a trance. First, there's a burning smell, it was overwhelming. And then I start seeing something, like scorched, black earth – and I realize it's not earth I'm seeing, it's skin, burnt human skin, the blackened husk of a human body, and smoke was rising from it. Helgi. The man had burned alive. First vision: Immolation.

KATRÍN: And this was all happening at the walk-in clinic?

JÓN: This is how I predicted his mother's death.

HELGI: Dad, you predicted that taking 50 Klonopin a day was going to give her heart failure. That's not E.S.P., that's statistics.

KATRÍN: I'm going to try out some of this make-up, such good stuff here, especially since the funeral's already been paid for with frozen meat and TVs.

*Katrín starts rummaging through the morticians' make-up kit.*

JÓN: *(To Katrín)* You can leave now, you're done here.

HELGI: She's allowed to use my makeup.

JÓN: After immolation comes death. I don't see a body this time but I'm certain there is death, some kind of destruction, annihilation, murder but no murderer. First someone burns, then something dies. And then, you appear, Helgi. Aaaaah, my colon. No, this is it, it's about to burst. *(He cries out in pain)*. Get me some water, girl. Get me water, kids. Water!

*Katrín starts doing her make-up. Neither she nor Helgi moves to get him water.*

JÓN: I'm drying up here, hello girl! Wasser! Agua! Vatten!

*Katrín gets a glass of water.*

HELGI: Leave her alone.

*Instead of handing the glass to Jón, Katrín dips a brush into the water and continues applying her make-up.*

JÓN: She thinks she's gonna lose if she gives a thirsty man of glass of water.

HELGI: Finish your premonition.

JÓN: Third vision. You're standing there, Helgi. You have lost all control, Helgi.

You're standing there. And the only choice you're left with is to cut out your own

tongue, you pull it out of your mouth and you slice it off. You have no choice left but to cut out your tongue. You won't be able to talk, Helgi, to tell people stories.

KATRÍN: My mom is into this new age shit too. When I was nine, she told me my dad was going to die. And I call her up yesterday, twenty years later, to tell her that he'd passed away and she says: What did I tell you.

JÓN: It wouldn't be the first time my visions came true. I begged your mother to stay with me and to take it easy, but she didn't have the sense to listen.

KATRÍN: You seem to have kind of a habit of begging people to stay with you.

JÓN: Yes. Look at your daddy. Fists clenched, mouth gaping, all alone and scared shitless. I'm not going out like that. You are born and you spend your whole life looking for the womb and in the end you find it here, in the morgue – gray and made of steel.

*Pause.*

KATRÍN: Sure you have time for a psychic reading, Helgi? Aren't you going to sing at a funeral?

JÓN: No, no, no, no, no. Now we've got to settle down. Helgi, the only thing you're going to do is to finish embalming the rest of the bodies and then you go straight home, stay the night with your father and we take her easy, you can fire up those legs of lamb and then we can play PlayStation. This premonition doesn't have to come true, think of it more like a little warning for you and me.

HELGI: I think you're exhausted, your colon is irritated, eating way too much sugar

/

JÓN: I told you I've been going easy on the sugar!

HELGI: Dad. You're seeing things and the solution you propose is for me to work my ass off, come back to your house to cook you dinner and play video games with you... You're taking the day off work. I'll handle the service for Kristmundur here (*gives the body a pat*). You take the day off.

JÓN: I'm no good at taking time off.

KATRÍN: You can go out for ice cream.

JÓN: Little Katie. Look into my eyes a minute. Oh I see, find that difficult, do you.

Focus on my forehead, then. I am warning him, I am warning you.

HELGI: You sang in a choir, dad?

JÓN: Did I sing in a choir? Helgi, I am a very high tenor, first tenor Helgi, leading tenor I /

KATRÍN: So why did they kick you out?

JÓN: Who told you that? Why are you bringing this up?

KATRÍN: I just had a feeling.

JÓN: Those old hags on the parish board, they /

HELGI: Mom sold a lot of records. And I remember how handsome you looked dad, how respectable you looked when you sang /

JÓN: I was only wearing my work uniform – gray waistcoat, black jacket, pointed shoes and a ring on every finger...

HELGI: Cheeks were red and you looked sort of... peaceful ...

JÓN: Peaceful, sure... until those hags on the parish board wanted to take me out of my uniform and stuff me into a goddamn robe, I told them they could /

HELGI: I always sing when I'm drunk.

KATRÍN: I liked it.

HELGI: Right?

KATRÍN: And you liked it, which is even more important.

HELGI: I could really do this. One song and my name written there in the program.

I'm going to sing at this funeral because I get to choose what I do /

JÓN: Service is today Helgi, you can't start making choices now /

HELGI: Go and see the baker /

JÓN: Sit.

HELGI: I'm not a dog.

JÓN: Sit.

*Helgi sits.*

HELGI: Go see the baker, order lots of food. Might climb into the cremator after that, see if I flare up like a matchstick. Katrín, you're coming to the funeral.

KATRÍN: I wasn't invited.

HELGI: There's not usually a strict guestlist at funerals.

KATRÍN: I've had enough of fathers for today.

JÓN: Burning, dying, then you cut out your tongue.

KATRÍN: Enough of fathers and the stories they tell...

JÓN: Burning, dying, tongue!

HELGI: If I'm waiting around for burning and dying and cutting out my tongue then I might as well use my time to do what I want to do.

KATRÍN: Come eat with me before the funeral.

HELGI: Today?

JÓN: He doesn't want to do that.

KATRÍN: See you later.

HELGI: Later.

*Katrín leaves. Jón examines Kristmundur's body.*

JÓN: You made him look very sweet.

HELGI: Don't get sentimental.

JÓN: All I'm saying, strange to see him looking so sweet.

*Pause. Jón gently blows air into Kristmundur's face.*

HELGI: What do you mean, why is it strange?

JÓN: He was an evil bastard, started rotting the moment he left the womb. (*He pulls the sheet off Kristmundur's chest*) Take a look in there.

HELGI: No.

JÓN: See that growth? Not the black one, that's tar from the cigarettes, that growth right here the blood-red one, you see it here?

HELGI: Yes.

JÓN: All real sick bastards have this red growth inside their heart, I've seen it a hundred times, all that tar can't even dull that red color. When I had my open heart surgery I made sure they took a picture before they sewed me up. Wanted to check whether I had one of these inside of me.

HELGI: There's no red growth inside of you.

JÓN: You got that right. No red growth inside of me. But Helgi, son. There's a big, bad red growth inside of that girl. Inside of Katrín. Couldn't help it, she got it from her father. You really did make him look sweet.

HELGI: In my head I don't believe you at all, I know she's not evil, that there's no evil red growth inside of her but for some stupid reason it's like my entire body agrees with every single thing you say to me.

JÓN: Intuitive boy.

HELGI: It's not intuition. It's just safe. For me to believe you always, to believe every story you tell. And then I never have to make a choice. It's like you put a spell

on me, put me into a trance. I'm starting to hate you for it. All you do is put me down like you were putting out a candle. You know, spit on your fingers and tchhhhh. Put me out. See how you do that to me?

JÓN: You look terrible.

HELGI: Hold his jaw for me.

JÓN: Now, push. Push it. Come on boy. Push!

*With a click, they force Kristmundur's mouth closed.*

HELGI: I want to handle this service on my own. Sing. Order the food. Today I can do it all. And then I'm going to do some more things on my own. Book a dentist appointment on my own, open a savings account, do a juice cleanse.

JÓN: Time to conquer the world, is it...

HELGI: Yeah, do it for me, I've never done any of that, you always hold me back.

So... take back your premonitions. Let's loosen his fingers.

*Jón and Helgi each grab one of Kristmundur's balled fists and begin to pry them open, finger by finger.*

JÓN: I want you to go home, and you play PlayStation. I'll handle Kris and this funeral. Then I'll come pick you up /

HELGI: In the hearse?

JÓN: No listen, I got a friend who runs a car rental, I buried his aunt, can get us a Benz for nothing, and we can drive out of the city and we can get some chips and dip and then spend the night at the Holiday Inn over by the lake. Got a friend there, she's the hotel manager, I buried her dog, a little chihuahua, two grand to bury one chihuahua, she wanted a real send-off, so we can stay the night over there /

HELGI: And next time? Next time I want to do something on my own?

JÓN: You look god-awful, son.

HELGI: You just announced that you had a vision about burning and death and me cutting out my tongue!

JÓN: So you believe me?

HELGI: No, but I wouldn't put anything past you.

JÓN: I let you make all the decisions. You didn't want to go to your mother's funeral, so we went to Madame Tussaud's in London. You remember, the wax museum with the statues who looked like they were alive. Meanwhile, some cheap funeral parlor was burying my wife. And we're at Madame Tussaud's.

HELGI: You should have forced me to go!

JÓN: Sure, sure, and now I'm goddamn forcing you to go home, go play Playstation, and when I get home we're going to go on a little road trip. Nobody burns, nobody dies, tongues firmly attached.

HELGI: One day where I do anything that I want to. One day where I can decide  
how the story goes.

JÓN: I warned your mother, and now I am warning you too.

## 2

### **bakery**

*Inside the bakery is a glass shop counter and an improvised chaise-longue which the Baker has fashioned himself out of two antique settees. Empty fridges emit a loud humming noise; there is flour all over the floor. A Little Girl is arguing furiously with the Baker. Both of them are too absorbed in the argument to notice Helgi, who enters quietly.*

BAKER: Pick something else.

GIRL: Sourdough.

BAKER: Pick something else.

GIRL: Sourdough is on my meal plan.

BAKER: I got no sourdough here.

GIRL: I'm allowed spelt. That's on my meal plan.

BAKER: I got no fucking spelt neither.

GIRL: But I'm allowed to have spelt! That's on my meal plan.

BAKER: Do you hear what I'm saying to you?

GIRL: I'm allowed spelt!

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***helgi comes apart***

BAKER: I don't sell no fucking spelt here 'cause I don't sell no fucking bullshit!

GIRL: If I go home and tell my mom: "The man in the bakery didn't have sourdough and he didn't have spelt so I had to buy a donut instead." Then my mom is gonna start crying and she's gonna say to my dad: "That daughter of yours is a pathological liar!" And then my mom and my dad are gonna have a meeting with the Wellness Coach at WeightWatchers. And she is gonna say: "Why didn't you make a healthy choice today, sweetie?" And because I didn't make a healthy choice, on Friday I won't be allowed on the mini-golf fieldtrip. And you know what I want to be doing on Friday?

BAKER: Eating your mother's ass.

GIRL: I'm going on the mini-golf fieldtrip. I want to have sourdough.

BAKER: What fucking fieldtrip?

GIRL: I'm in the youth group at WeightWatchers.

*The Baker starts pelting the Girl with donut holes.*

BAKER: How many of these can you stuff into your fat little mouth?

*Helgi jumps on the Baker, covering his mouth and pushing him down to the floor.*

*The little Girl roars with laughter.*

GIRL: Make that little cunt bake some fucking sourdough.

*The Baker pushes Helgi off.*

BAKER: (*furious*) Get the hell out, both of you!

GIRL: Get out yourself, little cunt.

BAKER: This is my bakery!

GIRL: You have to give me a ride to a bakery that has sourdough.

BAKER: Out!

GIRL: Please give me a ride, I'm too lazy to walk.

*The Baker throws more donut holes at the Girl who picks them up and throws them back at him, then walks out and slams the door behind her.*

BAKER: Fucking psychotic little bitches.

HELGI: Your daughter's going to be like that in a couple years.

BAKER: Not my kid, no goddamn way.

HELGI: No, they all get like that.

BAKER: You know how I got custody on weekends... no way, my kid is nothing like that little fuck. She's alright, she can even be funny sometimes, you know? She just don't like to try new things.

HELGI: You don't like to try new things either.

BAKER: That's why I'm saying, it would be better that my kid was a little bit more the enthusiastic type, we'd have a more dynamic thing going on, you know? Instead of her reminding me how useless I am. One time I won us these airplane tickets in a

Facebook game, and they just expired before we got around to using them because we were like, both too useless to choose where we wanted to go, pick the best destination or whatever.

HELGI: I thought you were going to take her to Disneyland?

BAKER: You didn't want to come with us.

HELGI: Yeah sorry. Maybe it would have been fun.

BAKER: Fuck it, I'd have lost the kid there anyway or maybe Goofy and Donald Duck would have abducted her ass to some fucking torture porn situation.

Kid's mother says she's an asshole when she comes back from staying with me. Says she takes everything out on her mother. Then there is that new child raising method: Kid starts crying, you're not supposed to tell them to shut up but you're not supposed to comfort them neither, you're just supposed to ask them how they're feeling. And every fucking day you got to remember to brush their teeth, put on their eczema cream. Gets you depressed after a while. Fucking P.T.A. always asking you to do them favors too. Last week they sent an email like: "Please bring some butter along with the bread rolls next time – consensus was, they were much too dry to enjoy on their own! Best regards, Helen." Can you believe that smug bitch? Consensus was? And of course I, you know I ain't exactly sober at the time. So I write back: "Dear Helen. How about you remember to butter yourself up next time – consensus was, your pussy's much too dry to be riding my dick like this!" But then the fucking whole P.T.A. got real negative about my response, and that really pissed

me off. And then cause I'm so pissed off, the kid is crying all the time. And I keep asking her how are you feeling but she can't respond cause she's fucking crying. She's crying cause I'm pissed off, and that just pissed me off even more. Tired me out. So I gave up my weekend custody. She stopped coming over, no more weekends with daddy. Daycare center's got Instagram anyway, so I can still see her pictures. Easier this way.

HELGI: You gave up your custody rights, are you retarded?

BAKER: Frees up a whole room in the apartment. I was thinking maybe to put an Xbox in there, and a bar, or one of those bar tables, found this mahogany one on Ebay. Make yourself a little cocktail, whatever. And you can come over. Bring your stuff. And you come stay with me. Play Xbox Live, jack each other off a little or maybe that's fucking gay, who gives a shit.

HELGI: But can't you just take a few weekends off, and then start having her over again?

BAKER: Can't give up custody for a while and then reactivate it like it's fucking Netflix.

HELGI: But you know, won't you get bored living there by yourself.

BAKER: Not if you come stay with me.

HELGI: Yeah, but like, what if I can't come stay?

BAKER: Then you come next weekend.

HELGI: I can't next weekend either.

BAKER: You move in beginning of next month, bar's gonna be all set up for you.

*Short pause.*

HELGI: I guess I don't want to move in with you at all.

BAKER: Hold up, am I misunderstanding something here?

HELGI: No, no, you're not, but everything's sort of different now. There's a funeral that I'm handling all on my own. And like, I started making choices, instead of other people just choosing me. Umm. I'm going to sing.

BAKER: Fuck that.

HELGI: Yeah.

BAKER: I'm the one who knows how to push your buttons, how to wind you up and then lick that sour puss right out of you. Gimme an hour or two and I'll have you spinning round and round. You're always saying about my arms, about how heavy they feel. Always asking if you can come stay the night.

HELGI: But when I touch you, I can feel how cold you are inside, like a frozen glove.

BAKER: Only gonna melt if you move in with me.

HELGI: If you ever melted, we'd both drown.

BAKER: You're so fucking negative!

HELGI: I'm not, I'm being realistic.

BAKER: Be careful now, realistic motherfuckers just end up on the P.T.A. /

HELGI: No, I'm not going to be careful. Not gonna be careful at all. And I don't even like playing Xbox. You're the one that likes video games.

BAKER: What are you trying to say?

HELGI: I don't want to sit there and watch you play Xbox and have sex with you just because you can't handle having your kid over on the weekends. And you should never have given up your custody anyway, you just need to be a little less useless. Don't you feel guilty about it?

BAKER: I feel guilty all the time anyway, don't even matter if I done something wrong or not.

HELGI: Yeah, so do I. So I might as well tell you that the other day I slept with this girl and I saw her again and I'm about to go meet her right after this. And I actually need to ask you a favor, because you're honestly the only other person that I know. I need some catering done, because we're going to have a funeral for her dad.

*Pause.*

BAKER: I want you to go and tell that girl, I want you to tell her, to go stand on her head, tilt her hips a little forward like this, and take a shit right in her pussy hole.

HELGI: Fuck, I know, I shouldn't be asking you for anything...

BAKER: I'll take out the trash every week.

HELGI: I don't want to live with you.

BAKER: I don't want to live with you neither, I don't even want you here right now.

HELGI: I'll be out of here in a second, I just need /

BAKER: Thing is, it ain't about wanting something. You hate taking out the trash, you love cooking but your food tastes like shit.

HELGI: So why do you eat it?

BAKER: Because you made it, I don't want it but it comes from you and everything that comes from you I ... I'm allergic to nuts but not when you feed them to me. You love to vacuum but you won't mop the floor, clean with too much soap because you think all the bubbles make the morgue table extra clean. You fold bedsheets how you learned to from a YouTube tutorial. Take care of dead bodies like you were their favorite babysitter. You read the newspaper every day but only the obituaries, and you've had a thing for me since you were twelve years old.

HELGI: Stop with the bullshit.

BAKER: You think I just want to own you, fuck you when I want to, and that's true. But what I want the most, sound like a real fag saying this ... is to be able to ... witness you. See you. You make me forget myself. And you got me new shoes.

HELGI: Big deal, they were my dad's old shoes.

BAKER: They were new to me.

*Pause.*

Helgi: What's my favorite animal?

BAKER: Your favorite animal is the elephant not because of how big it is but because elephants live for such a long time.

Helgi: Favorite ice cream?

BAKER: Orange popsicles.

HELGI: Sign?

BAKER: Libra. Rising scorpio.

HELGI: Whoa.

BAKER: Yeah.

HELGI: I thought you were just playing Xbox and /

BAKER: Didn't see you?

HELGI: Favorite car?

BAKER: Cadillac.

HELGI: Favorite color?

BAKER: Red.

HELGI: No.

BAKER: Yes.

HELGI: No. Red was uh, was my mom's favorite color. You confused us. Is that what's happening? You're mixing me up with her? Like me and her are melting into one person? Okay if we are but /

BAKER: No, never, your mom was just a party girl just some stupid ... you ... red is your favorite color.

HELGI: Stupid what?

BAKER: Red is your favorite fucking color!

HELGI: Blue, like an elephant. Stupid what?

BAKER: Whore. What is it you need?

HELGI: Food for 30 people.

BAKER: How much you got?

HELGI: A hundred.

BAKER: Get the fuck out.

HELGI: Please.

BAKER: It's funny, whenever your mom was begging for something, she never looked this sad. She was a much more fun beggar. And she'd offer to do anything in return...

HELGI: I've never asked you to do anything for me.

BAKER: Nobody likes an angry beggar. Your mom was always ready to give something in return, what am I gonna get in return?

HELGI: Maybe I could think about coming to stay, I could put some of my stuff into your drawer ... socks /

BAKER: Underwear.

HELGI: Underwear.

BAKER: I'll take care of it for you for 400.

HELGI: No sane person would give you more than 100 bucks for this crap, you buy it all frozen from Poland! (*Helgi grabs some bread and takes a bite.*) It's disgusting, you should be giving it to me for free.

*The Baker prods Helgi's stomach.*

BAKER: You putting on weight? Think you're getting fat. No room for fatties in my apartment.

HELGI: Maybe I should eat more sourdough. Do you sell sourdough?

*The Baker spits in Helgi's face, who stands there motionless.*

BAKER: Mad now? Pissed off? Look at you, turning red. No, you ain't even upset... little spit just turns you on, huh... little perv.

*The Baker kisses Helgi's chin, wipes the spit from his face with his apron.*

HELGI: My dad had a vision that everything's going to hell.

BAKER: And you obviously, just like your mother, believe all the bullshit that fat fuck comes up with.

HELGI: Someone burns, someone dies, and then I'm going to cut my tongue out.

BAKER: There's lot more to you than what people say you are and what you'll do.

Ain't nothing coming true unless you make it come true. I got a vision for you:

You're gonna take your pants off right now, and do a little spin for me.

HELGI: Come on, I got the hundred as a payday loan.

BAKER: Not enough.

HELGI: My friend's dad just died, he was broke, I just want to help her out.

BAKER: I don't give a shit about this girl, and you know it.

*Pause.*

*Helgi takes off his pants and does a 360-degree turn for the Baker.*

BAKER: Now turn the other way. Strip, and you won't have to pay me a dime.

*Helgi strips down to his shirt and white briefs. He turns the other direction. The*

*Baker lifts up Helgi's shirt, inspecting his body. He pokes his stomach again.*

HELGI: Pick up the phone and get your weekend custody back.

BAKER: I'll throw something together, sandwiches and some cake. Bring it over later.

*Helgi spits in the Baker's face, who smiles back at him.*

### 3

#### **katrín's apartment**

*Helgi is taking in his surroundings. A white sheepskin rug is draped over a chair, and shag carpet covers the floor. On the dining table is a pair of handcuffs and a glass of red wine. Katrín enters the room, holding a tray of roast chicken. Helgi is fiddling with the handcuffs.*

KATRÍN: You don't remember coming over here at all?

HELGI: Sure I do.

KATRÍN: You didn't use the handcuffs. Do they intimidate you?

HELGI: Um, yeah, but I wish they didn't. Hey listen, I ordered food for the service, real good stuff.

KATRÍN: I don't care, I'm not coming.

HELGI: But I /

KATRÍN: Why are you making this about you?

HELGI: You asked me to /

KATRÍN: It's way too much. I had a boyfriend like that. One time he bought me a 1500-dollar coat. And I'm kind of a drunk, you know. You give me something, I'm

probably going to puke on it. If I'm in a taxi, I'm probably puking into my purse, you understand? So obviously I was gonna puke on that stupid coat. Into the sleeve. And he was so torn up. Worked at this daycare center. And he told all the other nannies about it and they said: "You deserve so much better." And he got to be the poor hurt baby, so unfortunate to end up in a relationship with a disgusting alcoholic. Quit trying to do so much for me.

*Pause.*

HELGI: Is this chicken for me?

KATRÍN: "Is this chicken for me?" Then you act like it's the first time someone's done anything for you. Do you feel that sorry for yourself? Shit, my bad, I get psycho when I'm hungry.

HELGI: Why don't you do something for me: Take your fucking pants off and spin around.

KATRÍN: Now that's more like it. But I'm way too hungry to spin around, I would just pass out. *(Pause)*. Promise you'll never buy me an expensive coat.

HELGI: Just one you can puke on.

KATRÍN: You got it. So what are you like in a relationship? What kind of boyfriend are you?

HELGI: I'm someone else's boyfriend.

*Katrín laughs.*

KATRÍN: Let's eat.

HELGI: Don't you think your dad would be proud if you showed up today? I'm going to sing and there's going to be you know refreshments and like all that kind of stuff.

*Katrín picks up the box of wine.*

KATRÍN: Do you know how to taste wine?

HELGI: You don't taste wine that comes in a cardboard box.

KATRÍN: Sure you do, look they did this study, box wine and bottled wine in a blind taste test and people couldn't tell any difference, it's all the same shit. Besides, much better to drink bad wine because then you probably end up drinking less of it. Look, first you smell it. Mmmm. Then you turn the glass like this. Inspect the color. You see, the story goes that if the wine stains the side of the glass, that means it's sweet. And then you bring it up to your face like this... *(she brings the glass up to her face)* and you take a tiny sip *(she splashes the wine all over her face. Laughs. Wipes her face on the sheepskin)*.

HELGI: Okay, now we know how to taste wine. Why don't you want to make your dad proud?

KATRÍN: My dad and I are exactly alike, and we're both so ashamed of each other. He always had these younger friends, always him and the boys, you know. Then one time, I ran into him on an escalator. He was on the up escalator like the happy guy

that he was, and I was on the way down because I'm so depressing. And I saw him there, and felt so ashamed. Because I saw that his legs are or his legs were exactly like my legs, like this uninterrupted column of pink flesh from hip to ankle. And he had so much plaque that you could really smell it and he never went to the dentist because no one was around to make him go and he didn't know how to take care of himself, if he was walking with a limp then he needed someone to tell him: Kris, you're limping, cause even if my dad hurt himself, he never noticed.

HELGI: Maybe he just got used to feeling bad.

KATRÍN: He was definitely used to smelling bad, he always reeked of tobacco and plaque and rubbing alcohol, and his scalp smelled like the back of a bus in the summertime. But underneath all of it, there used to be a sweetness, like the way that little boys smell. But it dried up.

HELGI: Why did you say he was ashamed of you too?

KATRÍN: Well, he saw me there on the escalator, just this woman buying slippers on sale at the mall, and he remembered that his kid is already thirty. Which means he sure isn't thirty anymore. Not one of the boys anymore. Not even boyish, because he had far too much plaque. He was just a creepy old man on a bender. We saw each other and we were like a perfect reflection of each other's misery. The shame was just overwhelming.

HELGI: You need to say goodbye to him.

KATRÍN: I'm no good at saying no, I can only tell these little stories that explain that I'm trying to say no. And I'm almost out of stories. Can we eat this fucking chicken already?

HELGI: It's just that, you know like I've never experienced this kind of coincidence before. I never get these like omens or visions that my dad is always getting, in his dreams and that kind of stuff. I never get any extra information, because the universe like forgets to send me any signs. That is, until this morning when just by coincidence, we meet another time. And I'm actually in a position where I can help you. And you need someone to help you. And I'm kind of good at talking to you. I'm always really missing something, you know sometimes I just really miss my mom, and everytime that I'm wearing shoes I really miss just having my socks on, but when I'm barefoot and my feet get cold, I really miss wearing shoes but like all of that just kind of switches off when you're there, telling one of your bullshit stories. Even when you're being cold to me you're still kind of warm, you can't help it. Would you let me help you?

KATRÍN: Sure, I need some help shoving that knife up this chicken's ass and chopping its tits off, because I've never made roast chicken before.

*Short pause.*

HELGI: You know that whatever this is can't replace going to the funeral.

*Silence.*

KATRÍN: I feel like shit. And the way you want to help is by dragging me to this depressing funeral. What kind of a boyfriend does that make you?

HELGI: I already told you, Someone else's boyfriend.

KATRÍN: I want to have a boyfriend who is so boring that it calms me down. Who comes home and tells me about his day and it bores me into a meditative state.

HELGI: Am I that boring?

KATRÍN: You're not the most thrilling guy I ever met.

HELGI: (*Playing the boyfriend*) Whatever, babe.

KATRÍN: Ew, what's your problem, why did you call me babe?

HELGI: The tomatoes, babe.

KATRÍN: Oh I get it, you're playing my boring boyfriend.

HELGI: Babe, you won't believe what happened today with the tomatoes.

*Short pause and then Katrín begins to play the tomato game with Helgi.*

KATRÍN: What happened with the tomatoes, babe?

HELGI: Incredible deal on tomatoes today at Target babe. Ten pounds of tomatoes for ten bucks.

KATRÍN: Give them to me, is there enough room in the freezer? I'm going to clear out the whole freezer to make room. Actually, there's tons of space in that goddamn

freezer, there's nothing in there but my dead cat. I totally forgot to bury him this summer. I promise I'll get around to it next summer. But what's going on with the tomatoes?

HELGI: I'm walking over to the car with our tomatoes, and everybody's looking over at me and they're thinking: "Damn, that guy got a great deal on those tomatoes, he must be incredibly fiscally responsible!" And then I make sure to stack the bags of tomatoes really carefully into my vehicle, so that in the event of a collision, I can ensure that the tomatoes remain intact. But when I'm lifting the bags into the trunk I notice: these tomatoes are incredibly soft.

KATRÍN: Get out!

HELGI: I give them a squeeze. Turns out: Very squishy indeed. These are rotten tomatoes.

KATRÍN: Rotten tomatoes? My tomatoes? This is outrageous! I'm not going to fill my freezer with rotten tomatoes!

HELGI: So I march right back through the parking lot and back into the produce section at Target and I approach the employee and I /

KATRÍN: And you gave back those disgusting tomatoes?

*Pause.*

HELGI: No. Or like not totally. Not exactly. But Katrín what I did do, what I did do was I raised my voice, I used my most serious voice and I said in all seriousness that the quality of the tomatoes they had in stock was simply unacceptable.

KATRÍN: Did she offer to exchange them for fresh tomatoes?

HELGI: Yep.

KATRÍN: No, she didn't exchange them. You're lying to me/

HELGI: Yep

KATRÍN: You left and you brought those rotten tomatoes into my house.

HELGI: Yeah, but they're not gonna forget this face at Target any time soon.

KATRÍN: Of course they will. Why are you such a total loser, Helgi? Why must you fill up my freezer, my home, my entire life with rotten tomatoes?

*They burst out laughing, start kissing, forgetting all about the game. Helgi takes off his sweater, but when he takes off his pants, Katrín pulls away.*

KATRÍN: You're wearing white underwear.

HELGI: I got them at Target.

*Helgi tries kissing Katrín again.*

KATRÍN: What's wrong with you?

*Katrín pushes Helgi off forcefully.*

HELGI: What do you mean?

KATRÍN: My dad was wearing white underwear earlier.

HELGI: So what?

KATRÍN: (*Calming down quickly*) And next, you sprinkle a bit of lemon juice over the chicken, (*squeezing juice from a lemon-shaped bottle all over the roast*) grab some juice and just kind of piss all over it. And then coleslaw. Would you cut it please? Cut the asshole off first. And then the breast in half. Cut it. Slice it.

HELGI: I don't want to cut its asshole off!

KATRÍN: Then I guess we're going to watch it rot!

*Helgi pulls up his pants, stands up and starts cutting the chicken.*

HELGI: God, you would make a really beautiful corpse/

KATRÍN: Charming...

HELGI: No I mean it, your facial muscles would relax and the little lines around your mouth would disappear, then you'd stop looking like an old biddy /

KATRÍN: Just eat the chicken.

HELGI: I don't eat birds.

KATRÍN: Then just watch me eat.

HELGI: How come you didn't ask me what I wanted?

KATRÍN: The host gets to decide what's on the menu. Didn't your mom ever have you over for dinner?

HELGI: No, she /

KATRÍN: I can't handle any sad stories right now, I'm just gonna start laughing.

HELGI: No it's actually a funny story. Me and my dad, we get this message a few years ago. We were asked to collect a body from this pretty sketchy afterparty, out in the suburbs. And we get there and as I'm grabbing the body's legs to lift it up, I realize the dead body is my mom.

KATRÍN: What did you do?

HELGI: Obviously we just picked up my mom's body. In the end the county office even paid us for it. A hundred and twenty dollars or whatever.

KATRÍN: For real?

HELGI: Yeah. It's kind of funny right.

KATRÍN: Yeah.

*Pause.*

KATRÍN: What's it like to bury your parent?

HELGI: I don't even know. Me and dad just skipped out on the funeral like a couple of kids. We went on a trip to London instead and we went to Madame Tussaud's. We

saw Princess Diana. You can even tell from the wax model what a bad mother she was.

KATRÍN: (*jumping back into the game*) Helgi, I want you to get back in that car right this minute, buckle up and go return those disgusting tomatoes!

HELGI: Take your stupid tomatoes woman and go to hell!

*Neither of them is able to get any further; they give up.*

HELGI: I think it's all kind of getting mixed up in my head.

KATRÍN: My dad's funeral and what, the stuff with your mom?

*Katrín begins to remove her make-up.*

HELGI: Yeah, like if I sing and I do all this stuff for your dad then it's like I'm doing something for my mom at the same time. Is that kind of retarded?

KATRÍN: Yes.

HELGI: But I think it might actually work, I think it might help me, I mean I know it could help me, to actually be there and whatnot.

KATRÍN: So I have to drag my ass over there?

HELGI: Yeah, otherwise it's gonna be totally dumb, because the only reason that I'm singing is because you asked me to do it.

KATRÍN: Okay. I get it. I promise I'll be there. Just one thing.

HELGI: I'll go back and return the tomatoes.

*Helgi wipes the rest of the make-up from Katrín's face and begins re-doing it for her.*

KATRÍN: Do you think you're ever going to have a child of your own?

HELGI: I'm already basically a collection of children living inside one body. *(He takes Katrín's hand and places it on his throat)* Here's one that screams out whenever my dad's being difficult, but no one ever hears a sound. *(He moves her hand to his stomach)*. This one loves to get upset and to teach people a lesson – but the sad thing is, no one pays attention to the lessons that children try to teach us. *(He moves her hand down to his groin)* And here's one who is eager to do anything for absolutely anybody – always excited to try. The natural order makes sure that people like me – a collection of little children inside one body – will never have our own children in real life.

KATRÍN: Unusual.

HELGI: Do you have a black dress to wear?

KATRÍN: Only have black dresses.

**mortuary**

*The cremator crackles with heat. Jón takes three frozen legs of lamb out of a clear plastic bag; fumbling, he drops them all on the floor. He quietly picks them up and starts sneaking them into the cremator to defrost. Kristmundur's corpse has been embalmed and dressed; he is now wearing a suit and lies inside a coffin. The Baker enters, arms loaded with trays of food. He does not see Jón.*

BAKER: Helgi? A little help here?

JÓN: Where the hell have you been?

BAKER: You think I been on the run or something?

JÓN: Perhaps you better start running. In what rat-infested hole did Helgi find you?

BAKER: Found me deep in his own rat-infested hole actually...

*Pause.*

BAKER: How about you give me a hand with... (*Jón takes a small tray off the Baker's hands*) It's all there, and it's good stuff too, really good stuff. Sign this please.

JÓN: (*Ignoring his request*) So now he's baking bread. (*He places another leg of lamb into the cremator, singing to himself*) *Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker man...*

*Defrost this meat as fast as you can. And the flames take care of any excess bacteria. Helgi and I are going camping.*

BAKER: You tell him about that?

JÓN: Have a barbecue, father-son bonding. He doesn't have as much time for me these days, he's a popular boy now, got a real talent for sprucing up the recently deceased, makes the families think their loved one never died at all. The prodigal son. We compliment each other, make a pretty good-looking team too of course. Nice to be able to defrost a bit of meat and get it ready for the barbecue. Who do you take along on holiday?

BAKER: Sign it.

JÓN: Would be your daughter, wouldn't it, you got a little girl, don't you?

BAKER: Forget it, no point getting a signature, not like anybody paid me for any of this.

JÓN: (*Inspecting the food*) I wouldn't have given you a penny for this anyway.

BAKER: Nothing wrong with my baking.

JÓN: I could never serve this to any of my guests, even though I'm not personally above eating moldy bread. (*Takes a slice of cake out of one of the boxes, takes a large bite and spits it out, but immediately takes another bite*). Awful. (*Swallows*). So much mold on there, it's fermented.

BAKER: There's no mold on there.

JÓN: You should see how they paint flowers, in foreign countries that is. Not talking about Icelandic painters, they don't know the first thing about real art. When they paint a bunch of flowers in a vase over there, they paint one flower that's started to wilt, then another one that's freshly dead, and another that's already overgrown with mold. Because that's where the real life is, in the mold and the rot.

BAKER: I ain't moldy, I bake great bread.

JÓN: And who the hell thinks so?

BAKER: Your son likes it. And your wife, she did too... it's funny, that's something they always had in common with each other... They always swallowed anything I told them to swallow.

*Tense pause.*

JÓN: My family may sniff you out when they need to take a little holiday from life. But you better not forget that I am that life. You're an appetizer. I am beginning, middle, end.

BAKER: Some life, when you tell them people will burn and die and what was it, cut out his eye?

JÓN: No, that was in a play. I told him he'll cut out his tongue.

BAKER: You understand why they need a fucking holiday from you? And those holidays, they get longer. And in the end, the holiday swallows up their whole life.

You know that's how it goes. What's an old crook with emphyzema gonna do about that?

JÓN: I can see into the future, I forestalled accidents at sea, I found children who disappeared.

BAKER: Sure you didn't just hide those kids yourself?

JÓN: Maybe I should hide your daughter next.

*Pause.*

BAKER: Don't threaten me.

JÓN: I know how it is: First you had her every other week. Then on the long weekends. Then every other weekend. And now you never see her. You tell everyone it's because of those disgusting dirty diapers but the real reason is that you just couldn't afford to pay for all those diapers, and all that baby food, all those strange, feminine expenses. And you knew that everybody else could see. *(Silence)*. Your daughter, my wife, my son. They need you, but you let them down. And then you let them down again. You make everybody act desperate. How about I have that engraved on your tombstone: "Made everybody desperate. And baked moldy bread."

BAKER: There is nothing wrong with my baking. There is nothing wrong with what I do, I'm standing my ground.

JÓN: I predict that you're going to have something to do with my vision.

BAKER: And I predict that it's gonna be because of you.

*Helgi runs into the room, grabs hold of Kristmundur's coffin but neither Jón or the Baker move to help him carry it out.*

HELGI: Dad, they keep telling us not to defrost food in the cremator. We have to get going.

JÓN: Goddamn negative sons of bitches at this goddamn hospital, how are we supposed to barbecue these things if they're frozen solid!

HELGI: I don't want to barbecue.

BAKER: So it's just going to be you alone in that tent, Jón, with three uncooked legs of lamb. Fucking strangest porno film of all time. Helgi, I gotta talk to you.

JÓN: No one here's got any more time to listen to you whine. Don't you have a pill to make that go away?

BAKER: Shut your fucking mouth!

HELGI: My father and I are running late /

BAKER: You don't want to speak to me?

HELGI: No, how come?

*Violently, the Baker pulls Helgi close and kisses him.*

*Pause.*

JÓN: You don't know what the hell it is you want, you or your mother.

BAKER: She wanted anything but you.

*Jón gently takes hold of the Baker's hand, who tries to pull away.*

BAKER: Hey hold /

JÓN: I want to hear something sizzle, I'm getting awfully hungry, need to hear something sizzle and fry /

*Jón places the Baker's hand on the searing-hot door of the cremator; his flesh sizzles on contact.*

BAKER: Stop stop stop!

HELGI: Dad come on, not this again.

JÓN: Does it hurt?

BAKER: He's going to move in with me /

*The Baker screams with terror as Jón opens the cremator door. Jón stuffs cake into the Baker's open mouth, then holds his hand close to the flames. The Baker spits out the cake.*

HELGI: Dad please, someone might hear him.

JÓN: Want some more?

BAKER: No.

*Again, Jón burns the Baker's hand. This time, the Baker does not scream, but stands there stiffly, as if frozen.*

JÓN: Had enough?

BAKER: No. More. Do it more.

*Jón releases the Baker's hand.*

BAKER: More!

*The Baker burns his hand back into the flames, but Helgi pulls him off.*

JÓN: You goddamn freak.

BAKER: She wanted anything but you.

JÓN: *(To Helgi)* There was a time that your mother thought what she wanted was to go live in a village in Europe. When both of you were little boys. *(Helgi fills a container with cold water and puts the Baker's hand inside to cool)*. All she spoke was Icelandic and all she could do was embalm corpses, and of course she was a passable singer. But I told her there wasn't a single village in Europe in need of a dumb mortician. That the only way she was ever going to make a living over there was as a whore. An Icelandic whore, and that's what I told her. She knew that was the only thing that waited for her in the villages of Europe. But still, she took off. There's thousands of villages in Europe. I searched for seven months. Sold the Cadillac hearse to afford it, even hired a private investigator. It took another seven months for him to finally track her down in Riggisberg, which is a village in

Switzerland that's got a butcher, cheesemonger, you understand, a cobbler and a barber. It was midday when the butcher of Riggisberg pointed me towards the barber, right across the road. I walked in. Your mother had on a red leather vest, scissors in hand, and she didn't blink an eye. Like she knew inside that I was going to find her. At the time, I had thick, long hair down to my shoulders, blond and wavy. I'd been growing it out, conditioning it every other day. I take a seat. Ask her to give me a trim. She puts it all up in a ponytail, takes the scissors and cuts the whole ponytail off. And the other men in the shop laugh. Then she sits down. And she starts eating her lunch. I'm furious, screaming inside. But I didn't react, didn't say a word. Finally, she finishes her food. Comes back to me, keeps cutting. Cuts it short. Didn't look so bad but my long hair was gone. I stand up, get ready to leave. She wasn't going to charge me. But I take out my wallet. Pull out a 100 franc bill. And I crumple it up and I let it fall to the floor. Your mother did nothing. I pull out a 500 franc bill. Crumple it up, let it fall to the floor. The other men were all staring at us. But she did nothing. So I take out a 1000 franc bill, crumple it up and let it drop down on the floor. And then we all stare at your mother. And she bends down, picks up all the bills and smooths them out.

BAKER: This is what he does, he puts curses on people Helgi, that's what I've been trying to tell you, he is /

JÓN: And then, something happens. She hands me back the bills. Puts her scissors down on the counter. Took off her leather vest. Just like that, my prediction became reality. I had bought her like a whore. I held the door for her on the way out, I am a

gentleman, regardless of what you may think. We left Riggisberg. We took a short but delightful detour on the way home, slept in a tent. And you were so happy when mommy came back home.

BAKER: You ever think about how things would have turned out if you had left her the fuck alone?

JÓN: No. And what about you?

BAKER: Sure, how about I just leave everything alone.

JÓN: She wanted to have an abortion Helgi but I wouldn't let her do it, I forbade her to abort you: "There's a damn genius inside that pussy, woman!" That's what I told her. Got a picture of her pregnant here, look!

HELGI: Why do you have a picture of her?

JÓN: So I won't forget her.

HELGI: Why do you have to remember her?

JÓN: Because she made you.

*Jón slams the coffin lid closed, tosses the crates of food on top.*

BAKER: Helgi, talk to me. We can walk away. Your mom and I, we could have walked away too. People can always choose to walk away, they just got to do it. Come with me. He ain't nothing but words.

HELGI: I am running late and I don't want you to help me, you can help yourself.

*Helgi and Jón take hold of Kristmundur's coffin and carry it off.*

JÓN: *(to the Baker)* Turn off that cremator.

## 5

### the funeral

*Kristmundur's coffin stands center. Jón pushes Helgi onstage. Helgi clears his throat and he looks out over the audience who have transformed into the guests at Kristmundur's funeral.*

HELGI: There's been a song request. Or um. And well um. Yeah. *(An organ starts to play).*

*(singing)*      Who can take a sunrise  
  
                         Sprinkle it with dew  
  
                         Cover it with chocolate and a miracle or two.  
  
                         The Candy Man, oh the Candy Man.  
  
                         Oh the Candy Man can 'cause he mixes it with love  
  
                         And makes the world taste good.  
  
                         *(to the audience)* Clap your hands everybody.

*Helgi looks around at the audience. Suddenly, he stops singing.*

HELGI: Katrín? (*He keeps singing*). Katrín. Has anyone seen Katrín? (*Helgi has stopped singing, but the organ plays on*). Stop the music for a second. (*Music stops*).

Hello!

*Jón enters.*

JÓN: Listen, son.

HELGI: Where is she? She said she was going to come.

JÓN: Helgi. (*To the audience*) Gonna give this another try now. My son here is going to /

HELGI: Katrín!

JÓN: Want you to relax and take a deep breath here, kid.

*Jón moves closer to Helgi. Helgi collapses into his father's arms.*

HELGI: Katrín!

JÓN: Hush, hush. Come on son. Let's try again now. (*To the audience*) Alright boys, Helgi here is doing this for the first time and we're gonna, well we're gonna just, just let him try it again.

HELGI: No.

JÓN: Yes.

*Jón pushes Helgi back onto the stage and then disappears. And this time, Helgi sings the song a capella with the voice of an angel:*

HELGI: (*singing*) Oh, who can take tomorrow

Dip it in a dream

Separate the sorrow and collect up all the cream.

The Candy Man, the Candy Man can.

The Candy Man can 'cause he mixes it with love

And makes the world taste good.

(*to the audience*) Everybody clap your hands.

## 6

### **mortuary**

JÓN: People are gonna hear about this Helgi, they're gonna hear about this, a performance of that caliber in this business Helgi, everybody's gonna hear about this. To sing a joke song like that, to do it with all your heart... That's unheard of, been doing funerals for forty years, never seen it done like that. We can take this thing international, funerals worldwide, we'll bury some Swedes, we'll bury Norwegians, they're enormous over there, extra cash there son, charge them all extra for a double-XL casket. Goddamn you knocked that out of the park, goddamn beautiful performance.

HELGI: But where was Katrín, why /

JÓN: I'm handing the business over to you. Half of it. We'll run this funeral service together. Find a new name: Putting the Fun in Funerals. No, that's just an idea. I'll design a new logo for us. I got a real eye for design. Do a logo with you singing and me next to you looking dignified. You the future, me the old guard, respectable. I'll wear a tweed three-piece suit, look like a real old gent, serious but still with a sense of humor, and we'll do funerals in beige, start a whole new trend with our beige funerals, anything is possible Helgi my son, it's a wonderful life!

HELGI: Yeah, it was fun. But I always knew I could do that, I /

JÓN: Kris he would have loved that, he loved a bit of comedy, play him a song like that, he loved it. Take a bite out of this lamb.

HELGI: Isn't it raw?

JÓN: Sure, sure it is. Here have a little. Here's twenty bucks, nevermind, I don't have any cash on me.

*The little Girl from the bakery tears open the door, screaming:*

GIRL: Where are you, you idiot? Are you stupid, I'm dying over here.

JÓN: Then you've come to the right place.

HELGI: Hey.

GIRL: I've been waiting in the car for an hour – the baker promised to give me a ride to a real bakery!

HELGI: Didn't he throw you out?

GIRL: Only because you were in there, but I just waited outside. He'll basically do anything, but only when there's nobody else around.

JÓN: Oh really, is he your daddy?

GIRL: No, gross. His bakery totally sucks and only sells crap haaah and like he promised to drive me haaaah and I'm like totally dying over here I'm so hungry. Where's he at?

HELGI: Everyone here's dead besides us. I'm sure he's out by the car.

JÓN: It's too goddamn hot in here, get me a glass of water, thought I told that baker son of a bitch to turn off the cremator.

GIRL: Are you stupid, he's here!

JÓN: Turn that thing off Helgi.

*She finds the Baker's clothes and she throws them at Helgi and Jón.*

GIRL: These are his stupid clothes!

JÓN: Fix your attitude little lady.

GIRL: He's always wearing those clothes.

*Jón turns off the cremator.*

JÓN: Hey listen, Helgi. Here. Let's open this thing up.

HELGI: What's your problem, let it cool down first, it's just the lambyou put in there.

JÓN: No, hold on/

HELGI: What?

*Jón jumps up and nearly burns himself trying to open the cremator.*

HELGI: Stop it! *(He pulls his father away from the cremator).*

JÓN: You stop it!

*Jón pushes Helgi away and throws open the cremator door, pulling the cremation tray out forcefully and burning himself in the process. On the tray lies the scorched corpse of the Baker.*

*Pause.*

HELGI: This is... another body, it's someone else's body, put it back in, it's /

JÓN: It's that piece of shit baker.

HELGI: It's not.

*They inspect the body.*

JÓN: This is what I saw. The baker. Burned alive. I predicted this would happen.

HELGI: It's only somebody who looks like him.

GIRL: *(Picking up the Baker's clothes from the floor)* Put your clothes back on stupid, get back to work you little shit, I wanna donut, I need two donuts... You're not supposed to lie there like a fatso... You're not supposed to burn yourself like a loser... You're ruining it for everybody...

*The Girl tries to hug the Baker's body, but she burns herself. Jón puts her hand in cold water. They all stare at the Baker's immolated corpse.*

HELGI: This is meaningless, just a coincidence, doesn't mean anything. I told him about your vision and he makes it fucking come true. To get back at me. He hurt himself to punish me. He's always trying to break me down, he's dead and he's still

trying to break me down. All burned up, black, gray ... but you see his lips, they're still red, my favorite color.

*Helgi plants a tender kiss on the Baker's lips. Then he bites down, tears the Baker's lips off with his teeth and spits the shreds at Jón, who says nothing. We hear a notification tone coming from Jón's cellphone. Helgi slides the Baker's corpse back inside the cremator, turns on the flames and shuts the door.*

GIRL: *(To Helgi about the Baker)* Aren't you going to help him?

*Jón's phone goes off again.*

JÓN: What's that goddamn noise? *(Helgi grabs the phone out of Jón's hand)*. We've got to call the police, gotta tell them about this, or they're going to think I had something to do with it, they always think I had something to do with it.

HELGI: *(Reading the text)* They're asking us to go pick up a body.

JÓN: Let's get someone else to take care of it.

HELGI: We have to go pick up a body /

JÓN: We will do no such thing!

HELGI: From Katrín's apartment.

*Pause.*

JÓN: You want me to come with you?

HELGI: I don't want you to come anywhere near me ever again.



**katrín's apartment**

*It is pitch black. Helgi is pounding at the door. Finally, we see a cigarette being lit inside the apartment. Katrín takes a large swig of red wine from a glass, empties it and wipes it clean with a white cloth napkin. Nothing has been moved since they ate earlier that day: the table is set and the chicken carcass sits there on a tray, the Japanese knife still pierced deep into its heart. Helgi is still banging on the door. Katrín opens up.*

HELGI: What happened?

KATRÍN: Nothing.

HELGI: Who's dead?

KATRÍN: No one.

HELGI: Then why did you ask us to come pick up a dead body?

*Helgi approaches the chicken and pulls out the knife.*

KATRÍN: It was the only way to get you over here. There's something I need to tell you.

HELGI: Why didn't you show up?

KATRÍN: I had to go to the drug store, and then I started reading this article online about caterpillars and butterflies and then I was already late for the funeral. There's still plenty of chicken left.

HELGI: I hate birds.

KATRÍN: Is that what your problem is? I mean what the fuck is your problem?

HELGI: You sent me to come pick up your own dead body!

KATRÍN: So? Your girlfriend's kind of kooky, congrats.

HELGI: (*Laughing*) You're not my girlfriend, you know that.

KATRÍN: Then why are you whining like we've been together for a hundred years?

HELGI: I don't want to hurt you but /

KATRÍN: Then stop.

HELGI: I can't be close to you.

*Helgi walks right up to Katrín.*

KATRÍN: You're pretty close to me now, I would even say a little too close and we both seem to be fine. Do you know what happens the day after the world ends?

HELGI: No.

KATRÍN: Kids go to school with their shirts on inside out, people forget to bring shopping bags to the grocery store – everything goes on, everything is the same.

HELGI: Not if you put a stop to something.

*Helgi plunges the knife back into the chicken and leaves it there. Katrín is fumbling around with a paper bag from the pharmacy.*

KATRÍN: Hey listen, your mom popped a lot of pills, right?

HELGI: Knock it off.

KATRÍN: So you must know about /

HELGI: Stop.

KATRÍN: Should I take this white one or the blue one?

HELGI: Take all of them, I don't give a shit.

*Katrín takes both pills and washes them down with a glass of wine.*

KATRÍN: You know, I love to drink red wine and read articles on Wikipedia.

There's this long article about the most beautiful butterfly in the world, except it's not technically a butterfly, it's a moth, but I think it's almost the same thing. It's called the Atlas butterfly. Maybe you wrote the article. The Atlas butterfly is huge but it doesn't have a mouth, it crawls out of the cocoon and it flies around and it just fucks all day long until night comes and it dies. Maybe it starves to death, who knows. Just born to fuck and be beautiful. Little slut.

HELGI: What was it you wanted to tell me?

KATRÍN: Right before the butterfly dies, when it's been fucking nonstop all day and its wings are starting to feel weak, the butterfly starts to wonder how its wings ever really worked at all, and then it remembers that all day long, it didn't even notice it was flying.

HELGI: Don't you think you're more like the larva than the butterfly?

KATRÍN: When you say something like that, that I'm the larva, how am I supposed to act like anything other than larva? You're like your dad and his premonitions.

HELGI: Which already started coming true.

KATRÍN: What do you mean?

HELGI: My best friend burned himself to death. He climbed into the cremator.

KATRÍN: I guess this country does get very cold... What's supposed to happen next?

HELGI: It doesn't even matter, it's over, nothing else is going to come true, it's just a coincidence.

KATRÍN: Death.

HELGI: Yeah, that's why I freaked out when I saw the text that you were /

KATRÍN: Or destruction. *(Pause)*. Let's lie down for a while.

HELGI: I'm not tired.

KATRÍN: Let's play a little?

HELGI: No.

KATRÍN: Just play with me a little bit. And then I'll cut the rest of this chicken and use it to make chicken salad and we can put it on bread and you'll let me sleep on the couch just for a minute. Let's play a little, the tomato game.

HELGI: No.

KATRÍN: Just a little, then you can leave and never see me again. Okay, it's a birthday party.

HELGI: No.

KATRÍN: You're the daddy at the birthday party.

HELGI: No.

KATRÍN: I'm the mommy.

HELGI: Is the chicken the birthday boy?

KATRÍN: Yeah. And it's an Indian theme. With naan bread and um, butter chicken.

HELGI: The chicken eats chicken?

KATRÍN: Yeah, our son is a total freak.

HELGI: There's not enough food at the party, we were too cheap to buy enough for everyone, the guests are so hungry they're going insane.

KATRÍN: (*laughs*) Yeah, who's coming to the party? (*Katrin is clearly physically unwell*). Is your dad coming?

HELGI: Are you okay?

KATRÍN: Keep going.

HELGI: Yeah, my dad is coming. With thirty tiny little disposable spoons.

KATRÍN: Pretty disappointing party so far.

HELGI: Yep. And the birthday boy.

KATRÍN: ... actually, they longer identify as male /

HELGI: Another great disappointment.

KATRÍN: But they're also the star of the football team.

HELGI: So well adjusted, that's a sign of good parenting.

KATRÍN: And you make a speech.

HELGI: About nothing.

KATRÍN: About absolutely nothing, and I even think to myself: Wow, five whole minutes absolutely devoid of any content, I love this man.

HELGI: Nice and empty.

KATRÍN: Just how I like it.

HELGI: Naan bread's underbaked.

KATRÍN: Yeah, still kind of frozen.

HELGI: You've put on some weight over the years but I still want to sneak you off and fuck you in the bathroom.

KATRÍN: No, let's fuck in the pantry, we have one of those walk-in pantries, and then I can eat Graham crackers while you fuck me.

HELGI: Huge ass.

KATRÍN: Because we're not trying to run away from anything. We sit back and let life just leak through us /

HELGI: And we always tell each other the truth.

KATRÍN: Unless the truth might hurt.

HELGI: No, we won't get hurt.

*Katrín kisses Helgi on the lips. The game is over.*

KATRÍN: *(breaking free from the kiss)* I'm sorry. I have to tell you.

HELGI: What is it? What did you do?

KATRÍN: Go stand over there.

HELGI: Okay. *(He moves over to the other side of the apartment and starts taking off his shirt).*

KATRÍN: I already knew that you worked in the mortuary. I came there today to see you. To see if we could... have something together, you and I. And then I asked you to come eat with me, and I saw that you do have a light inside you, but it can't find its way out. And so, we could never have... a kid together.

HELGI: So what? We're just going to be one of those aunts and uncles who spend time working on our tan instead of having kids.

KATRÍN: Did you notice the tattoo that my dad had? What it said?

HELGI: No.

KATRÍN: "God make me a better man, starting tomorrow."

HELGI: (*giggles*) What are you getting at?

KATRÍN: When you were here the other day.

HELGI: Yeah.

KATRÍN: I was wasted out of my mind.

HELGI: Yeah.

KATRÍN: I didn't remember that you finished.

HELGI: Inside you?

KATRÍN: Yes. So those pills earlier, one of them was just an Advil, but the other one induces an abortion.

*Pause.*

HELGI: Throw up the pill.

KATRÍN: Don't come closer, stay there!

HELGI: Throw up the pill!

KATRÍN: It's too late it's already started dying, I can feel it.

HELGI: Katrín!

KATRÍN: You told me to take both fucking pills!

HELGI: God, you're so fucking /

KATRÍN: Don't come closer. I can feel it dying. Maybe I always feel like there is something dying inside me anyway but /

*Helgi searches for the knife.*

HELGI: Throw up that pill.

KATRÍN: I didn't realize until you said /

HELGI: This is the destruction, the death that my dad saw coming.

KATRÍN: Yes, I can see that now. I'm sorry.

HELGI: Why didn't I get a say in any of this?

KATRÍN: Because you can't hear anyone else over the bullshit in your head.

HELGI: Throw it up.

KATRÍN: It's too late you idiot!

*Pause.*

HELGI: Throw it up.

KATRÍN: How were you planning on keeping a child alive? I would have definitely dropped it on its head at some point. I'm too stuck, and you're too stuck, it would have been born stuck just like us, and been a fetus forever.

HELGI: People's organs keep functioning after they die, their toenails keep growing, their hair keeps growing too until it starts growing mold and there's even life in the mold when you think about it. You can't stop life, I could have told you that!

KATRÍN: You told me to take both fucking pills!

HELGI: Are you saying that this was my fault?

KATRÍN: Yes, I need it to be.

*Pause. Katrín takes the knife from Helgi and lays it on the table.*

HELGI: I would have never let you mess up this kid's life, let you run away to Europe, I would have protected it.

KATRÍN: You would have protected it for as long as it suited you. And you would have turned it against me, to gang up on me.

HELGI: So now what?

KATRÍN: Tomorrow I'm going to go to the clinic and this little fetus or whatever it is is just going to go into a plastic bag and into the garbage.

HELGI: You heard when my dad predicted this, why didn't you put it together?

KATRÍN: I'm too tired!

*They both sit down.*

HELGI: (*touching Katrín's abdomen*) Is it over?

KATRÍN: I think so.

HELGI: So like, the second after someone dies, everything is exactly the same.

KATRÍN: Unless you start something new. And nobody died, it's no big deal.

HELGI: Why didn't I get a say in this? I'm sorry.

*Helgi stands up and picks up the handcuffs.*

KATRÍN: Oh, now you want to get kinky with me in the pantry? I don't really want to fuck right now.

*Helgi kisses Katrín, licks her, handcuffs her to the leg of the table. He steps away.*

HELGI: Now I'm in charge.

KATRÍN: What uh, what are you trying to do?

*Katrín tries to break loose.*

HELGI: I need to make some of my own decisions.

KATRÍN: Okay, your decision, not the pantry, just the bathroom, just right here,  
first let me sleep /

*Katrín is still trying to free herself. Jón bangs on the apartment door. Helgi picks up  
the knife.*

JÓN: Helgi, we need to go! Let's drive up to Canada, let's disappear for a while, this  
thing with the baker is messy. Helgi!

HELGI: Get the fuck away from here.

JÓN: Helgi!

KATRÍN: *(to Jón)* Come in here! Kick down the door!

*Jón kicks down the door.*

JÓN: That goddamn baker has fucked it all up for us by pulling that stunt, we have  
to pack our bags and drive up to Canada and we/

KATRÍN: Helgi, don't.

*Helgi paces around the apartment, knife in hand.*

HELGI: Leave me alone. I have to think this through.

KATRÍN: Hold on a second.

HELGI: Someone burns. Something dies. And then I cut my tongue out.

JÓN: Helgi. You are in control of how this all turns out. Put down that knife.

HELGI: Somebody burned because of me. Something died because of me. It was because I... So if I... Tongue cut out, all thanks to me. A mouth with no tongue can't tell any stories – right?

JÓN: Helgi my son I made that prediction to protect you, Helgi my dear boy, to teach you that/

HELGI: And then it's me who decides how the story ends.

*Katrín tries to free herself, but she is unable to. Helgi brings the knife up to his mouth, and he slices off his tongue. Blood pours from the wound. He stands there for a moment, soaked in blood. He then walks over to Jón, collapsing into his father's arms.*

## prologue -

### **katrín's apartment**

*This is the night that Katrín and Helgi meet each other for the first time. Helgi is standing in the apartment doorway.*

KATRÍN: There's something wrong with you?

HELGI: What?

KATRÍN: As if you were ... good.

HELGI: Is it because you're drunk?

KATRÍN: I'm always drunk but I never meet anyone who is good.

HELGI: I think you're not so bad yourself.

KATRÍN: Which means you must be drunk too – I've got this disgusting Sambucca and then there's red wine in a box over there. Which one do you prefer?

HELGI: Your call.

KATRÍN: You pick.

HELGI: Sambucca.

KATRÍN: Then come in here.

HELGI: *(standing still)* You live here alone?

KATRÍN: Yes.

HELGI: Then you must always be alone.

KATRÍN: I'm not alone right now.

HELGI: No, because I'm here.

KATRÍN: *(laughs)* Yes, because you're here. Come in.

HELGI: *(comes in)* What was your name again?

KATRÍN: Katrín.

HELGI: That suits you.

KATRÍN: Thanks. Helgi suits you.

HELGI: No way, it means holy.

KATRÍN: I think you are holy.

*Helgi looks around the apartment.*

HELGI: Feel like being spontaneous right now and hanging up those pictures, doing your dishes.

KATRÍN: You think it's messy in here?

HELGI: That's not what I meant. I meant like...

*Helgi kisses Katrín until they fall down on the floor.*

HELGI: Did you hurt yourself?

KATRÍN: I never get hurt.

HELGI: I didn't mean to make you fall over.

KATRÍN: Maybe one day we're going to tell our kids the story of how the first time you tried to kiss me, you threw me on the floor.

HELGI: Our kids would never believe that story.

KATRÍN: (*giggling*) Why wouldn't our kids believe that story?

HELGI: Because I would teach our children...

KATRÍN: What would you teach our children?

*Helgi smiles. Short pause.*

KATRÍN: What? What would you teach our children?

HELGI: To never believe the stories they're told.

*Blackout.*



Tyrfingur Tyrfingsson's award winning plays have been featured at Festival d'Avignon, La Mousson d'été and during Island, terre de théâtre at Théâtre 13 in Paris. In January 2020 his play *Helgi Comes Apart* was a part of the 2020 Nordic Spirit Festival in Chicago. In October the Teatr Dramatyczny in Warsaw will perform a reading of Tyrfingur's *The Potato Eaters* which will also be a part of the final event of Fabulamundi in Rome. Toneelgroep Oostpool has bought the rights to that same play in The Netherlands. Tyrfingur's plays have been translated into Dutch, Italian, French, Polish, German and English.

Tyrfingur Tyrfingsson was born in 1987 and grew up in the small town of Kópavogur, Iceland where all his plays take place. He studied at the Iceland University of the Arts, Goldsmiths University of London and Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts.

Tyrfingur's first play *Grande* was his graduation piece from the Art Academy and earned him recognition in Reykjavík and a nomination to Gríman, the Icelandic Theatre Award. Two years later *Blue Eyes* premiered at the Reykjavík City Theatre where Tyrfingur was made resident playwright.

Tyrfingur has received seven Gríma nominations and won the award once and is now up for the Play of the Year for *Helgi Comes Apart*. In the fall of 2018 *The Potato Eaters* were nominated for the Cultural Awards (Menningarverðlaun DV). He has taught at both The Iceland Academy of the Arts and the University of Iceland.

*Blue Eyes (Bleus)* was given a staged reading at the Avignon festival in July 2018 during a forum dedicated to contemporary writings. *Bleus* was also performed at La Mousson d'été in France in August 2019.

*The Potato Eaters* received five star reviews, with critic Jakob S. Jónsson naming Tyrfingur as Iceland's preeminent playwright. *The Potato Eaters* were featured at Théâtre 13 in Paris during the festival on contemporary Icelandic playwriting called Island, terre de théâtre in April 2019. In September *The Potato Eaters* will be read at the final event of the Fabulamundi project. And in October 2020 the Drama Theatre of Warsaw (Teatr Dramatyczny) in Warsaw will perform a reading of *The Potato Eaters* as well.

His play *Helgi Comes Apart* premiered at The Reykjavík City theatre on the 17th of January 2020 to raving reviews: "Chekov is fine and Bulgakov is fine, but they do not raise the audience's blood pressure. Tyrfingur's work does." *Helgi Comes Apart* was featured at the 2020 Nordic Spirit Festival in Chicago in February.

*Blue Eyes* and *Helgi Comes Apart* were performed online by the ensemble of The Reykjavík City Theatre in April 2020.

Tyrfingur's next play *Seven Fairytales about Shame* will premiere on the big stage of The National Theatre of Iceland in April 2021.

Tyrfingur Tyrfingsson lives in Amsterdam.

[www.tyrfingsson.is](http://www.tyrfingsson.is)