

Thebas motel

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translation by James Nee

A dirty hotel room. Clothes are strewn on the floor amidst open suitcases. Behind the window blinks a red neon light, which illuminates off and on the name: THEBAS MOTEL. The light produces a slight hum which mixes with the far-off noise of the traffic. Two shapes can be seen on either side of the bed. The radio is on, playing Christmas music. The weather is stifling hot, the typical hot before a storm. One of the characters, in an effort to attract the attention of the other, jokingly raises the radio volume.

RADIO: We interrupt this programme to bring you this newsworthy bulletin. Today, the twenty-eighth of December, the main branch of the Banco de Fomento was robbed. The robbers, three men and a woman, fled as soon as the robbery was over and vanished in broad daylight. Reliable sources estimate that the haul amounted to five hundred million pesetas. This is all the information that we have received up to now; we shall offer further details in forthcoming bulletins. We now return you to our regular programme on this warm summer's day in December.

The music grows louder. A hand switches off the radio. The woman turns on a lamp as she holds back a giggle, then lies down. The man, sitting on the other side, opens a suitcase and starts to throw money over the woman's body. Both are sweating despite being scantily clad.

SELENE: They vanished in broad daylight.

MARINO: As if by magic.

SELENE: The money vanished, the robbers vanished.

MARINO: Light-footed. They vanished into thin air.

SELENE: Light-footed! Light-footed!

She turns toward the man, then lies down.

SELENE: All this, the hold-up, would have been impossible. It all would have been impossible without you... They would have caught us right at the door of the bank.

MARINO: It really is very easy, you just have to come up with the perfect formula, a fool-proof plan. To be light-footed. Light-footed. It never fails.

SELENE: **(Sticking her feet up)** Oh, feet! Why do I love thee?

MARINO: They would never stop to think that the prey, instead of escaping, would back up into the mouth of the wolf. All in all, it still is the warmest place.

SELENE: And where the money is at its safest.

MARINO: Where it doesn't leave a trace. In a safety deposit box at the Banco de Fomento.

SELENE: The police must be all mixed up. They won't know where to begin... They'll have to turn the town upside down.

MARINO: They'll make such a mess.

MARINO holds the suitcases up high and strews the clothes across the floor, making the room even more untidy.

SELENE: They're a hopeless case. They'll book thousands of suspects.

MARINO: But they'll never think of backtracking and return to the bank. Search the safety deposit boxes and find out that the loot is being kept right at the bank without them even realising it.

SELENE: Banks are very safe places.

MARINO: And they'd never think of checking out a nearby motel either.

MARINO takes out a revolver and pretends to be a policeman, putting a bag on his head for a hat, and hiding at the foot of the bed.

MARINO: They tiptoe in, ask for the registration book, notice a couple of suspects. She, a good-looking woman and he, a quiet man. Book 'em, question 'em, and arrest 'em. Hands up!

MARINO lies on the bed strewn with banknotes, points the revolver at SELENE's face. She dodges, lets off a shout, gets up off the bed and goes to the window.

SELENE: It's so comfy here. It's such a nice place. I feel so...empty. As if I didn't have any responsibility. Only to live...to live. Like a vegetable.

MARINO: You can see the bank from here. A room with a view...of our dough.

SELENE: Look at the stars. They look like they're dancing in the sky.

MARINO: That's the pollution. The air is so bad that the starlight flickers. That's why they seem to be dancing.

SELENE: That may be true..but I know they're happy.

MARINO: The stars...do you know how fast the stars travel? They move so fast that nobody can see them, too fast for the naked eye. That's why they always seem to be motionless. If we could move that fast, who knows what we would be capable of. What is it thinking? What is it up to? Nobody would even know if it has moved or stayed still.

SELENE: You're right. Nobody would know who you are or where you're from. I wonder if even you know.

Spotlights shine in the window. SELENE looks out.

SELENE: There they go again.

MARINO: The coppers.

He hides the revolver among his clothing and then approaches the window.

MARINO: Kiss me. Everyone does the same in a place like this.

They kiss. They kiss even though SELENE finds it a bit odd. The spotlights disappear from the window but they remain embraced in their passionate kiss. SELENE comes back to reality and tries to let go of MARINO, but gives up in light of his insistence. Eventually they separate and SELENE moves away to lean on the window sill.

MARINO: Selene...

They kiss again. But this time she doesn't put up a fight.

SELENE: What are you doing?

MARINO: I love you, I've loved you since the first time I saw you. And you love me too.

SELENE: Don't be silly. You're just a kid and I...

MARINO: I love you.

SELENE: Leave me alone. I can't belong to anyone any more, I once belonged to another man, you need something else, someone young... someone who... Besides, not long ago... It just can't be. The life we lead... Believe me, it just wouldn't work out.

MARINO puts his hand over SELENE's mouth as if to strangle her. With his own mouth he gives her another kiss. She puts up a struggle, but little by little she stops resisting.

MARINO: I love you.

He slowly takes his hand off SELENE's face.

SELENE: Marino... you've realised ... you've realised from the very beginning. What a fool I've been trying to hide it.

MARINO: I didn't have to wait long. I only had to show you what I'm capable of. I wanted you to see that I can do great things.

SELENE: I know you can do it.

MARINO: You can love me now.

SELENE: I don't deserve this.

MARINO: You can love me now because you trust me.

SELENE: Shut up.

They separate. SELENE starts picking up the money from the floor.

SELENE: What will the others think of us when they found out?

MARINO: They'll just have to get used to the idea.

SELENE: I don't think they'll be so amused that I've given myself to another man. They worshipped Pastor.

MARINO: Your husband?

SELENE nods her head and sits on the bed.

SELENE: He was like a father to them.

MARINO: So what?

SELENE: There are rules... and laws among us.

MARINO: Worship is for church saints only. Men are remembered for a short time only and then are soon forgotten. That is the law, the law of life.

SELENE: You always have an answer for everything. You're not very consistent.

MARINO: They're just words. Words are not consistent.

SELENE: When you talk you seem to be playing a guessing game.

MARINO: Wouldn't you like to be a fortune teller?

SELENE: No, I wouldn't like to know, don't want to know.

MARINO grabs SELENE by the waist and kisses her; they fall on the bed. They laugh. The telephone rings, she gets up and picks up the receiver.

SELENE: It's them.

MARINO: On time.

SELENE: Hello...yes, it's me. You can go to the station now. The number?... Locker 838... There you'll find the train tickets, your next instructions and an advance... for your expenses... That's right. The coppers are running around in circles. Good job. The money? Where it should be, just as we planned.

She grips a wad of banknotes and smiles.

We'll see you soon... A month is not so long...I know I sound like your mother, but what can I do? Yes, of course there'll be a signal, how could there not be? Just like in the old days. Keep making noise. Take care.

She hangs up and smiles.

That was them.

MARINO kisses her again, she hugs him feebly.

MARINO: Everything's hunky dory. You see?

SELENE: It'll take them a while to get used to the idea. In their mind I cannot belong to any other man but Pastor. Just imagine, they made a blood pact. They swore to avenge his killer. They swore not to stop until finding him. At any price.

MARINO: Why didn't they do it?

SELENE: As if it were so easy...we don't know who did it.

MARINO: You were working for the Colombians.

SELENE: The same as you.

MARINO grabs a beer and opens it.

MARINO: They must have clues. Do you want one?

SELENE: No, no. I prefer to remain calm. I'd like to sleep...to rest finally.

MARINO: Go to bed...I'll turn off the radio.

SELENE: No... no. I can't sleep.

MARINO: How did your husband die?

SELENE: It was terrible. The lorry that he was driving caught fire and ... he was completely charred, beyond recognition.He was already dead anyway. They had already strangled him with either wire or chain. And they did this as they slit his throat. It was awful.His whole body... completely disfigured.

MARINO: The Colombian calling card. It's their handiwork. You had better forget it. The ones that did this are no slouches. And if the Colombians are behind this it could be dangerous. What's more, take a look at these guys—they're just a couple of brats.

SELENE: They're not such kids any more. They're the same age as you.

MARINO: (**pointing at his head**) But here there's only sawdust and cartoons.

SELENE: Marino.

MARINO: What?

SELENE: Marino... promise me something.

MARINO: What?

SELENE: Swear to me that there won't be any more hold-ups, that we won't keep on in this way.

MARINO: I'll be taking care of you from now on. No more fear. I'm taking you out of the business.

SELENE: You'll get us all out of this.

MARINO: From now on you'll have to think only about yourself. You're young, you should live your life. You're a wonderful woman. It would be a crime for you to get old acting as a mother to these phonies. Abandon them, they're old enough to learn on their own. Light-footed, light-footed in everything. And besides, they're not your children.

SELENE: (**sad**) No, they're not my children.

MARINO: You're not responsible for them.

SELENE: No.

MARINO: You have to live for yourself now. Do whatever you want.

SELENE: Yeah, but do you swear? Promise!

MARINO: I promise.

SELENE: Swear that there'll be no more robberies.

MARINO: I swear.

SELENE: Murders.

MARINO: I swear.

SELENE: Drugs.

MARINO: I swear.

SELENE: Shady deals, swindles, kidnappings and cons and...

MARINO: I swear. To all that.

SELENE: **(smiles and breathes calmly)** All right. Now I believe you.

She slowly caresses Marino's face as she looks out the window.

SELENE: Look, the moon has come out.

She gets up and runs to the window.

SELENE: But you can hardly see the stars.

MARINO: Because of the pollution?

SELENE: No way! Because of the neon lights. They give off more light than the stars and so hide them.

MARINO: Look over here, Selene.

SELENE turns around and MARINO takes a snapshot with flash, flooding the room with light. The Polaroid camera develops the photo automatically.

SELENE: Where did you get that?

MARINO: Look at this, with the moon and the neon lights, but it's you that shines the brightest.

SELENE: I can't see anything.

MARINO: Keep the faith, woman. It's starting to show. You see? See the colours?

SELENE: No, I can't see anything.

MARINO: What do you mean you can't see anything? Look closer.

SELENE: How awful! That isn't me!

MARINO: Of course it's you. Who would it be otherwise? Your ghost?

SELENE: Give that to me. Don't look at it.

MARINO ducks and hides the photo.

MARINO: A souvenir.

SELENE: Or evidence to be used against us.

MARINO: Evidence. Evidence of what? Evidence for the gossip magazines. A young widow and a rough-looking bloke have been seen alone at a motel, scantily clad.

MARINO takes another snapshot. As an automatic reflex SELENE covers her face.

SELENE: That camera is broken. It confuses people.

SELENE jumps on MARINO in an attempt to get the photo back, but he embraces her as they melt into a kiss, rolling around the bed. SELENE takes advantage of the moment to get hold of the photo and tears it up. They laugh and kiss again.

SELENE: It's so comfy here! I never want to leave this place.

MARINO keeps on kissing her.

MARINO: But you're going to have to even if you don't want to, honey. We're rich, don't forget, and I won't allow my woman to live in a dump like this.

SELENE: Will you build me a new house?

MARINO: Just for you.

SELENE: No, for the two of us.

MARINO: For the two of us, with all the money we've got at that bank.

SELENE: All of it?

MARINO: Almost all of it, I'll leave those dickheads a good tip, they've behaved alright.

SELENE: You wouldn't do that.

MARINO: I've already decided.

SELENE: What have you decided?

MARINO: We need that money; we have to set ourselves up. You and I are getting out of this. They have their lives ahead of them; they still have a lot to learn. It would be a waste to share the loot with them. Don't worry. They'll understand. After a while they'll even stop looking for us.

SELENE: But they've been in on this from the very beginning. It wouldn't be fair to leave them with nothing.

MARINO: This job is mine alone! They've just got in the way. They did their job and they'll get paid for it, but the loot is mine. All mine...for the two of us.

SELENE: They've been with me for so long.

MARINO: Stealing your youth. Let them stay with the Colombians, they'll always have work there.

SELENE: They were loyal to Pastor. They made a blood oath.

MARINO: Promises, promises! That's the only thing they know how to do. To cackle like hens. They didn't prevent Pastor from dying and didn't even know who killed him. Pastor died and they'll soon follow if they don't get their act together. I don't want them around.

SELENE: And if they come after us?

MARINO: I'll kill them.

SELENE: Marino...

MARINO: Nobody is going to make me change my mind. And neither of those two fools is going to take you away from me.

SELENE: But if...

MARINO: Don't give it any more thought. For them it'll seem like a prank.

SELENE covers MARINO's mouth with her hand, frightened.

SELENE: No, pranks no. Don't talk like that.

MARINO: Are you still afraid?

SELENE: Afraid? **(she smiles)**

MARINO: Nobody will find us where we're going. Each to their own.

MARINO grabs SELENE by the neck and kisses her. They kiss again. MARINO takes her nightgown off. They make love on the bed.

RADIO: No further developments regarding the robbery of the Banco de Fomento. And when there is no news, the best we can do is listen to music.

CURTAIN

SELENE, naked, leans on the headboard at the foot of the bed. MARINO is lying face down on the bed. They are both dishevelled and out of breath. The radio volume is turned down low.

SELENE: I'm lost... **(pause)** What time is it?

MARINO: Late. **(pause)**

The radio is playing a song, which is interrupted by the commentator.

RADIO: The heatwave is still upon us on this raw winter's night. Although a great storm seems to be heading this way, the weatherman cannot give an explanation for this strange weather. No need to worry, for we shall be with you all night as always, to offer you the music that you like to hear. Here's one more...

Music is playing again. The police spotlight returns to the damp room. SELENE follows it with her eyes. As if by revelation, the walls of the room show objects and cracks that had previously been hidden by the dark. SELENE picks up her nightgown and puts it on.

SELENE: We should get out of here as soon as possible. I don't like this place.

MARINO: You liked good enough a while ago.

SELENE: I can't sleep.

MARINO sits up, caresses her and looks out the window. He gets up.

MARINO: This place certainly has a strange name. Thebas Motel. More than strange, it's exotic. They probably found it in one of those encyclopaedias that are only good for giving the names of dead men to bars. Are you going to set up a business like this with your money? Will you give it the name of a dead man? Thebas Motel... Thebas Motel... Sounds like the name of a film about espionage. Spy movies are a drag. So many secrets and no solution. Thebas Motel... No doubt, sounds like a dead man.

SELENE: We still don't have all the money. And there'll be checkpoints all over the place.

MARINO: You think it'll be so hard?

SELENE: We aren't the only ones who know where the dough is.

MARINO: So you think those guys will two-time us?

SELENE: How can you say that? Trust me, they only had eyes for Pastor. They followed him blindly.

MARINO: Pastor, Pastor. It's always Pastor. There are only two ideas in that thick head of theirs: obey Pastor and hide behind his apron strings.

SELENE: If only...

MARINO: Pastor is no longer with us, there's no one to think for them. It's over. Listen up—Pastor is long gone. He's just a fond memory, that's all. The same goes for those two kids.

SELENE starts putting the money into piles according to face value.

SELENE: One thousand pesetas in one pile, five thousand in another, ten thousand in another. Each to his own. **(She laughs.)** That's funny. That's what they said when they were racking their brains trying to figure out the signals. Pastor taught them that. A couple of kids. Pastor was conning them and they had no idea. Maybe they deserved to be treated like that. They needed to be around him. They were happy and that was all that mattered. In a way, Pastor was taking care of them. They had fun inventing passwords and unintelligible signals with silly objects. They thought they were big shots. We thought we were big shots. What a gang! They were always happy, like one big happy family. Me and Pastor had fun with them. I'm sure gonna miss them.

MARINO: Forget them, Selene.

MARINO looks for his socks under the bed. He finds them and puts them on.

SELENE: They kept on saying the same thing: each to his own, each to his own...

MARINO: (Angry) They were always in Pastor's shadow. They never learnt to find their own way.

SELENE: Maybe we were more than parental figures for them.

MARINO: Can't you see? They can't live with us. They'd ruin everything. It's better this way, trust me.

SELENE: It'll be a hard blow for them.

MARINO: It'll do them good.

MARINO takes another photo of SELENE, who is dazzled by the flash. She loses her train of thought, stops talking and smiles.

SELENE: And...?

MARINO: (Looking at the photo as it comes out of the camera) Look. It's developing. I can see you more and more.

SELENE: You certainly like snapshots. If you've left them something so obvious as a signal they'll feel a bit let down. You know how demanding they are. Marino, are you sure this is the best way?

MARINO: It's the best way for me and you to leave this life behind, give up walking in anyone's shadow afraid that at any moment we might get shot. It's the only way to begin a new life. It's what you want, isn't it?

SELENE: Yeah.

MARINO: You won't feel let down?

SELENE: Who do you take me for?

MARINO: The babysitter of those brats.

SELENE: You jerk!

MARINO takes another photo and SELENE hits him with the pillow. The camera flies through the air, clicking away. They struggle in fun.

MARINO: Damn thief!

SELENE grabs the camera amidst the jumble of bedclothes and aims at MARINO as if it were a gun.

SELENE: You're under arrest in the name of the law. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you.

MARINO: (Laughing) What am I being accused of?

SELENE: Of committing the biggest robbery of all time using the false art of seduction. Of stealing the heart of a poor and grieving widow. You'll get 'life' for this.

MARINO: At Alcatraz?

SELENE: I still haven't decided where we're gonna build our house.

MARINO: Why didn't you and Pastor get out?

Pause. SELENE puts the camera down. She puts on a bathrobe and walks to the window. She picks up the camera and contemplates her image.

SELENE: There was never a last job; there would always be one more. It was never enough.

MARINO: Why didn't you take on something really big?

SELENE: It never occurred to us. Maybe we just couldn't. We chose to be henchmen for the Colombians and take away some of their contacts. Nothing important, but they found out, and they squashed us. They killed our son. Since then nothing has gone too well.

MARINO: You had a son?

SELENE: Yeah. **(She pauses)**

SELENE: They made us work for them in exchange for sparing their lives. The cruellest thing they could have done, worthy of dogs. We had to look at the faces of those killers every day. But Pastor wouldn't be intimidated. He was still set on having his own clientele. And they bumped him off. They certainly had us in a bind. That's when it was really over. They spared the boys for my protection. They were considerate enough to give us work. Selling drugs like fishwives. But now everything's changed. Now you're in charge. Sometimes I think I attract bad luck like a magnet.

MARINO gets up and hugs SELENE next to the window.

MARINO: Selene, don't even say that.

Pause. They kiss.

MARINO: Start packing the bags. And make sure everything is ready for when the right time comes.

SELENE: You should explain what we're going to do. Explain all your plan to me.

MARINO: And you have to tidy away my socks.

SELENE: From now on you'll never wear socks that don't match.

MARINO smiles and smacks SELENE's bottom, while she starts picking up.

MARINO: Come on. Light-footed! Light-footed!

Not paying attention, SELENE picks up the photo and throws it into the waste basket. She starts readying the clothes, putting some into piles on the bed. MARINO takes the photo out of the waste basket and lays it on the bed. The police searchlight passes the window once again and lights up the room.

MARINO: What have you got against this photo?

SELENE: What's that?

MARINO: Nothing. Hurry up.

SELENE: What are we going to do? How are we going to trick them? The best thing we could do would be have them running around, throwing the police off our scent. They're the only ones who know our hiding place. They could start blabbing at any moment, that is if they haven't already thought of conning us.

MARINO: We have the key to the safety deposit box.

SELENE: You're sure.

MARINO: Everything is under control.

SELENE: What do you mean?

MARINO: We follow their game.

SELENE: What game?

MARINO: The one with the signals. Aren't they into that nonsense? They'll find a signal at the station. A custom-made signal.. A signal that means all goes well. They'll never suspect. That'll be the first move, only it'll mean that everything's in order. They'll take the first train, just as we planned. They'll keep the police off our backs for a while and give us time to escape. Complicated. They'll like that. Light-footed. Light-footed. Then they'll get a new signal, a repeat of the same object, a special object, a unique object...and a key that opens the safety deposit box. Home delivery dough. A silly game, right? But they'll be calm, very calm. Without any fear. They'll never suspect that we're hauling away the bounty. It'll take them months to get back here. They'll take trips, have a good time, they won't even hide; that's the way it's planned. They'll be calm. Very calm. Their obsession for signals will keep them from suspecting that they're being conned. When they finally open the box all that they'll find will be an airplane ticket. To go away on holiday. To Africa. On a photo safari...to meditate on their future. They'll need to. They'll never find us. No way. No clues. Even the Colombians will be glad we're gone.

SELENE: The Colombians? How would they know?

MARINO: The Colombians know everything.

MARINO takes an envelope and writes an address on it. He takes a key from the pile of clothes and ties it to a silver medallion like a key chain. He holds it up and stares at it.

MARINO: 28 December. A good day to get rid of you. Fools' Day.

MARINO puts the medallion into the envelope, seals it and throws it onto the bed. He turns on the radio.

RADIO: This is your station for music and news around the clock. The rains will soon be here to pick up your spirits on this strange, warm winter's day of 28

December. And to get away from this odd Fools' Day weather joke, nothing better than to find a nice, warm spot and some good company and listen to the music you like. Music that means something to you. Every day, a different song. Every day a special day. **The music plays.**

SELENE: I can't stand sitting around doing nothing. They know this place, they have our phone number. We should leave as soon as possible.

MARINO: Don't worry. This is the safest place in the world.

SELENE: They're jealous. They'll come because they're jealous of you.

SELENE tidies up the bed. The envelope where MARINO put the medallion falls from among the bundle of clothes.

SELENE: What's this? It's heavy.

MARINO: A secret.

SELENE: What is it?

MARINO: The signal. Are you into that foolishness, too?

SELENE: Come on, don't be silly. Tell me what it is.

MARINO: You'll have to find out for yourself.

SELENE: I want *you* to tell me.

SELENE picks up the envelope and shows it to MARINO. He laughs.

SELENE: Come on...

MARINO: (shakes his head 'no') mum's the word.

SELENE shakes the envelope to hear if its contents are metallic and to see how they slide around.

SELENE: Are they coins?

MARINO: Cold, very cold...

SELENE: Diamonds?

MARINO: Are you mad?

SELENE: I give up.

MARINO: You can't.

Suddenly **SELENE** tears the envelope and the medallion comes rolling out. **MARINO** laughs, but **SELENE** kneels down in amazement over the discovery.

MARINO: How odd...

SELENE: (frightened) It's true, it's all true. It's all true...

MARINO: Selene...

SELENE: You killer! You murderer! So it's true after all. You really *are* a killer...

MARINO: What's got into you?

SELENE: You're crazy. This is Pastor's medallion. He always carried it with him. He didn't even take it off to go to bed.

MARINO: Pastor?

SELENE: It stained his neck, but he never took it off, not even one minute. And yet, it wasn't there when they found his body...

MARINO: Pastor was the one who drove that heap of a truck? The one who swiped the coke from the Colombians?

SELENE: Marino!

MARINO: Yeah...he wanted the goods all for himself. That's why they had to bump him off.

SELENE: Bump him off?

MARINO: The Colombians. They offered me the job.

SELENE: It was you.

MARINO: The last dirty job I ever did for them. I didn't like it. I didn't care about killing. It wasn't the first time; it wouldn't be the last. But to kill like that...I saw how the Colombians cut the wings of a loser. I realized that it could happen to anyone, even to me. This is the last time, I said to myself, and I saw that medallion around his neck. An awful scene...

SELENE: Like sheep to the slaughter...

MARINO: Yeah, I killed him. I saw the mess, the awful mess. I told myself I wouldn't kill again, I'd never take on another hit job. That's why I took his medallion.

SELENE: Images frighten you more than people.

MARINO: Maybe he was innocent too.

SELENE: Me too. I swore too. To get even with Pastor's killer.

MARINO: Promises...empty words.

SELENE: I also swore to love Pastor until my dying day...

MARINO: I was tricked, too. I thought it was going to be just another job. I'm no copper, much less on the narc squad.

SELENE: You killed him.

MARINO: Hand it over.

SELENE: You took Pastor away from me.

MARINO: Give me the medallion.

SELENE: You took him away, you murdered my dreams and my nightmares only to give me back happiness with blood on your hands.

MARINO: You would never have been happy with him.

SELENE: The medallion...the murder...

MARINO: Do you love me?

SELENE: Yes.

She bursts out crying. The medallion rolls across the floor. She hugs MARINO.

SELENE: I've broken all my promises. I'm free because I'm unfaithful. I'm all alone. And I'm alive.

MARINO: Selene, I swear I'll love you, and you'll forget all this. I'll make you forget. You'll forget it all, everything.

SELENE: I love you, too. But I'm a traitor. First you brought me misfortune and then joy. Finally I've found happiness. And I've found despair.

MARINO: Forget it, just forget it.

SELENE: Tell me again that you love me.

MARINO: I love you.

The telephone rings. They both jump.

SELENE: They can't know what's going on. If they try to get back at us, it's because they're jealous. They can't know it; they made me swear.

The telephone rings.

SELENE: It's them. They're reading my thoughts. If they find out they won't stop until...

The phone rings again.

SELENE: They don't know. They can't know.

MARINO: They know. Answer, Selene. You don't know anything. Don't say anything. Stick to the plan. Everything's all right. You don't know anything. Understand? As if you didn't know anything.

SELENE nods without knowing what to do. The telephone rings.

MARINO: Answer it. Pick it up. Be natural. Show them you're angry. Tell them not to call again. It's not part of the plan. Be tough, make like you don't know anything. You know nothing...

MARINO picks up the receiver and hands it to SELENE, who hesitates, then grabs it. The sky has clouded over. Thunder can be heard in the distance.

SELENE: Hello...

You shouldn't have called back, that's the way we planned it.

It's dangerous...

Of course everything's all right. You're the ones who have to work now. No, we're staying put. What's up with you guys? Haven't you been paid in part already?

Yeah...

Yeah, yeah...

Sure, everything's fine...

Great...all set then...

All set!

Good luck...(she hangs up the telephone and collapses.)

They shouldn't have called again. They're reading my thoughts.

MARINO: Take it easy...let me think.

SELENE: They know everything. They'll kill you.

MARINO: No, Selene. It would be suicide for them.

SELENE: They won't listen to reason. Why have they called again?

MARINO: They must be real idiots.

SELENE: They read my thoughts. Believe me, they read them.

RADIO: We interrupt this programme to report that the main branch of the Banco de Fomento was robbed this afternoon of about one thousand million pesetas. Police have no clues as to the perpetrators. All roads leading out of the city are being watched, although it is believed that the robbers will stay put for the next few hours.

MARINO: A thousand million? What are they talking about?

SELENE: They know. The coppers know too.

MARINO: They don't know anything. It's pure routine.

RADIO: A few more minutes of music before we announce the winning number of the ONCE lottery. Music for the fortunate, music for the disillusioned.

SELENE: They're beginning to search motels.

MARINO: Let them search...search hotels, motels, inns, roadhouses, the suburbs, whore houses...they won't know where to begin.

SELENE: They'll bring the coppers here. That's how they'll get even.

MARINO: Your kids?

SELENE: **(shouting)** I haven't got any kids. No kids! Not one! You hear me? I won't have any more kids. I don't want to hear about kids...

MARINO: Calm down.

SELENE: I don't want you to bring that up again.

MARINO: Okay, I won't.

SELENE: They're not my kids. They never were.

MARINO: No, they're not...

SELENE: They never were. Never, never...

MARINO: Never...

SELENE: Never, never, never, never...never. Marino!

MARINO: Never.

SELENE: I will never have kids again...

MARINO: Selene...we're getting out of here. We're leaving. You know: light-footed, light-footed...but let me think.

SELENE: You know where I want to go now?

MARINO: Where?

SELENE: To the countryside, to my parents' house. I haven't seen them for a while. I don't even know if they're still alive. They haven't heard from me since I left home. I was just a kid; they never even met Pastor. I want to go back to square one, go back home as if nothing had ever happened.

MARINO: All right, we'll go to the countryside, we'll have an outing. But right now we have to hit the road.

SELENE: Yeah, we should get out of here...

MARINO: Pack your bags, we're leaving right now. When all this blows over we'll head back to the bank for the dough.

SELENE: Where can we go?

MARINO: Out of town.

SELENE: They have all the exits under surveillance. We won't be able to drive out of here.

MARINO: We'll leave by train.

SELENE: They'll be watching everywhere.

MARINO: Then we'll walk.

SELENE: Are you afraid of those kids?

MARINO: I'm not afraid of anyone.

SELENE: Then why are you so jumpy?

MARINO: Those novices...if they come here they'll have the coppers on their tail.

SELENE: They're not going to come. They told me so on the phone.

MARINO: You're contradicting yourself.

SELENE: They called because they suspect something, but they know we haven't taken off.

MARINO: And if they want revenge?

SELENE: They would never put me in danger. We just have to get rid of that damn medallion.

MARINO: **(picking the medallion up off the floor)** No. They know everything. And they're on their way. Let's hope it takes them a while.

SELENE: Why are they coming?

MARINO: They know everything. You yourself said they promised to get back at the murderer, that they wouldn't hold back one second. Their life wouldn't have any meaning without revenge. They wouldn't think twice about putting their lives in danger, as long as they could get back at Pastor's killer. You want more motives? Like sheep to the slaughter. Bloody medallion, damned brass medallion, cheap tin-plated medallion. And their stinking obsession for signals, the brainless brats...complex signals, terrible scene...damn it, the damned fools!

He throws the medallion to the floor and sits on the bed, head in hands. SELENE picks up the medallion and caresses it.

SELENE: They'll get even, for sure, but they don't know anything yet.

MARINO: Yes, they do.

SELENE: No, they don't, they couldn't see it yet.

MARINO: Selene, I killed him, me! And this hung from Pastor's neck. They swore revenge.

SELENE: No, they don't know. They haven't seen this yet. This medallion is unique.

MARINO: You think so?

SELENE: Of course. Pastor had it made. He even designed the engraving.

MARINO: We have to think of something. Light-footed, light-footed, light-footed...

SELENE: Everything's going to be all right. We only have to change the signal and get rid of this.

MARINO: Light-footed, light-footed...

SELENE: We could throw it into the sea, or even further.

MARINO: Too late. We have to wait for them, and backtrack all the way. We'll wait for them, but first we have to run from the police and then...and then give them the slip.

SELENE: Why? They'll never find us. They're jealous that's all, just jealous. They don't know anything.

MARINO: Yes, they do. They've seen this shit.

SELENE: No, they haven't.

MARINO: Yes, they have.

SELENE: When?

MARINO: A few minutes ago. At the station. It was a signal. They haven't taken the train. And they won't, they'll come here. They're on their way. We have to think of something.

The telephone rings underneath the bed. A frightened SELENE jumps at the unexpected call.

SELENE: It's them.

MARINO: Don't answer it. Let me think.

The telephone keeps on ringing.

SELENE: But we have the medallion.

MARINO: That is our salvation. We should keep it until it's all over. They should see two medallions. Two instead of one. They'll be blind with vengeance. They hate me, but I'll fool them. I'll fool them once again. I'll show them two medallions. I'll make them believe that I didn't kill Pastor. We'll tell them I bought it in Turkey, or Tunisia and they'll see two medallions, two that are alike. I'll convince them the jeweler made several copies.

The telephone keeps on ringing.

SELENE: This can't be.

MARINO: Answer it. We've got nothing to hide. They'll have to believe that. We have nothing to hide from them.

SELENE: This is impossible. That man made only two...and then he died.

MARINO holds the medallion up. Frightened, **SELENE** stands up, covering her mouth. The first bolt of lightning lights up the room, followed by a deafening thunderclap. The telephone stops ringing.

MARINO: Two?

SELENE takes the medallion from **MARINO** and takes a close look at it.

SELENE: One for Pastor and one for Manuel, our son.

MARINO: No, the other was mine. I was surprised to see another one like mine. I didn't think there was anyone else in this world with taste as bad as mine. There's something upsetting about them.

SELENE: Pastor had two medallions made.

MARINO: Bleeding medallions! He also put his nose where it didn't belong. In the beginning they let him live, but then...he had it coming. Who was the other one for? For you?

SELENE: For you.

MARINO: For me?

SELENE: For Manuel, our son.

MARINO: Manuel? No, it always, it was always with me. It was a gift of the gods. That's what they used to say, a gift of the gods because it saved my life. A fisherman saw it shining and he jumped into the water. I was in a small life raft, just drifting...

SELENE: The Colombians, they kidnapped you when you were still a child.

MARINO: Set adrift on the waves...

SELENE: They hunted us down. They wanted Pastor to tell them where he had hidden the stuff.

MARINO: Somebody must have come up with the name Marino, you know, for maritime...who could it have been?

SELENE: It was a treasure, our salvation. We could begin a new life. We'd be rich...

MARINO: When they found me, my body was one big sore, my entire back burnt by the sun.

SELENE: That's when they took you away from me and all those riches just vanished. Pastor stopped talking. We couldn't believe they would go so far, we thought they wouldn't dare, but they did...

MARINO: I became one of their own. They gave me parents, brothers and sisters, a family.

SELENE: They told us you were dead.

MARINO: I lost my job. I never understood, but I preferred not to ask questions.

SELENE: It was all the Colombians' doing...

MARINO: All of it. It was all a lie. Nobody found me at sea.

SELENE: It would have been better if Pastor had talked, if he had given back the money. Sure thing, it would have been better if he had talked.

MARINO: It was that hunk of tin that opened my eyes. Two men who don't know each other but have the same whims. Two men who know nothing about each other, but turn out to be soul mates. They meet by chance and their destinies become intertwined. One of them must die...I ran away from home. I was afraid of shaming my family.

SELENE presses the medallion to her breast and cries as she holds on to the headboard. MARINO approaches and places his hand on her back.

SELENE: They took you away from me. They kidnapped you when you were a child. They made you kill Pastor and finally they sent you to me, to kill me. It was all planned, the most cruel revenge.

MARINO: Selene, I love you.

SELENE: They didn't kill you.

MARINO: No, they haven't killed me. I'm still alive.

SELENE: You can't see the moon any more. They've covered it up, they've sent a regiment of black clouds to kill it.

MARINO: Selene...

SELENE: You can't see the moon any more. Everything is dark. You can't see anything.

MARINO: Selene, stop talking nonsense.

SELENE: Yes, Manuel. It was us. Your father and I. We had two medallions made. Pastor kept up with his business. We stopped at that village on the coast.

He got his hands on a good cache. Then they were after us. We were happy, but Pastor feared for our lives. It was a dangerous affair, a big sting. Even the Colombians got nervous. He wanted to get out too. He wanted to withdraw from battle.

MARINO: Just let it be, Selene. We have to get away now. Maybe those idiots have let the cat out of the bag and spilled their guts to the police.

SELENE: And why should I care about the police? Nothing matters anymore.

MARINO: Selene, listen to me. We're leaving, taking off. We'll go ahead with the plan. Nothing can stop us. We'll change our names, become different people, live other lives. Nobody will recognize us.

SELENE: But I'll recognize you. I'll see you every day, see your face resting on the pillow close to mine, and your name will be like an explosion in my head: Manuel.

She bursts out crying.

MARINO: Manuel...

SELENE takes a revolver from her handbag and points it at MARINO.

SELENE: Don't touch me. I'll wait for them. I'll wait here for the police. Just leave. Don't come near me. Take off! I'll keep them occupied. Just enough. I'll trick them. But I'm staying here.

MARINO: What's wrong with you?

SELENE: I love you.

A flash of lightning floods the set, and is soon followed by a clap of thunder.

MARINO: And I...

SELENE: Don't move.

MARINO: I won't leave you alone.

SELENE, revolver still in hand, kneels at the foot of the bed. The telephone rings.

SELENE: My son between the sheets. The monster.

Lights from the police cars flood the room. The deafening sound of the sirens mixes with the thunder.

SELENE: Yes, it would have been better if Pastor had talked.

MARINO looks out the window and sees the police. As he hides himself, he stares at the telephone, which doesn't stop ringing.

POLICE MEGAPHONE: (off stage) This is the police. You're surrounded. You have three minutes to come out with your hands up.

MARINO: They're here.

SELENE: Run! You're still young. I'll stay behind. I'll take the blame. For everything.

MARINO: No, I can't leave you like this, alone.

SELENE: You have your whole life ahead of you. Run!

MARINO: A life without you!

SELENE: No way. It just can't be. Run! I should take the blame. Light-footed! Light-footed!

MARINO: But I love you.

SELENE: And I love you. Now run. Take off or I'll shoot.

MARINO: No, no way.

The police shoot and all the panes of window glass break just as the moonlight becomes visible from behind the dense cloud cover. Shots tear through the walls up to the bed and shred the bedspread, against which the coloured lights from the police cars are reflected. The neon sign of the motel is smashed to pieces. A peal of thunder gives way to silence. Two figures can be seen moving through the darkness. Mother and son.

SELENE: (whispering, almost laughing) You know what, Manuel?

MARINO: Shut up.

SELENE: How odd...none of the Colombians was from Colombia.

MARINO: Why did you believe them?

SELENE: It couldn't be any other way, Manuel. It just couldn't be...

MARINO: Why not? Why did you abandon me? Why didn't you come back for me?

SELENE: It would have been better...anything else would have been better...

A shot rings through the web of police sirens. SELENE has shot herself. MARINO turns and runs to her.

SELENE dies. MARINO picks up the revolver and with the same hand shuts his mother's eyes. The police megaphone can be heard.

POLICE: (off stage) You are surrounded. Give yourselves up and you will not be harmed. There is no way out, I repeat, there is no way out.

MARINO leans against the wall and looks at his revolver. He holds it up to his temple and is about to shoot but stops, lowers his hand, and drops the revolver.

He sits on the bed, turns up the radio and puts on his socks as he throws the photographs and money onto the floor. The thunder and lightning sounds for the last time.

RADIO: At long last the rain is here. The baptismal water which regenerates life. Seems like a summer storm in the middle of December. Crazy weather we're having, but let's move on to something else. The winning number for today, 28 December, Fool's Day, of the ONCE lottery is the following: three, four, seven, eight, nine. I repeat: three, four seven eight, nine.

POLICE: (off stage) Come out with your hands up and you will not be harmed.

RADIO: Three, four, seven, eight, nine. Thirty-four thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine.

MARINO gets up, throws the revolver onto the messed-up bed and approaches the window with his hands up.

MARINO: There's no way out. (He looks out the broken window.) Each to his own. Each to his own.

CURTAIN