

Estragon: Well, that was lovely, wasn't it?

Vladimir: Lovely. But...

Estragon: But?

Vladimir: Something is missing.

Estragon: Missing?

Vladimir: Yes. I know! We need lovers

Estragon: Good idea! (*claps her hands*) I give you... Georges! (**Georges** appears)

Vladimir: And I give you. Albin! (*nothing happens*) Albin?

Estragon: Let's wait and see what happens.

Georges: (*Banging on the dressing room door.*) Albin! Albin! Open this door! Albin! Let me in! Albin, do you know what's going on out here? Open this door! (*Banging on the dressing room door again.*) Albin, I will count to three and then I will break in the door. (*Suddenly the kitchen door opens and , in a tattered bathrobe, appears.*)

Albin: I am not in the dressing room, Georges. I am in the kitchen, and I have been in the kitchen since lunch. These hands have been dredged in flour for the last time (*He blows flour off his hands.*) I shall never cook again!

Georges: (*Coming down the stairs.*) The Great Zaza! You'll be the ruination of me and this club with your lateness. Now hurry and get dressed.

Albin: Where were you this afternoon?

Georges: What's the difference? Get dressed.

Albin: I made a magnificent lunch. He said he would be home. He wasn't

Georges: I might as well talk to his mother.

Albin: I de-boned a chicken, stuffed her with pistachios and wild rice, topped her off with truffles and where was he? In absentia!

Georges: There are five hundred paying customers waiting for the Great Zaza and he stands there reciting the lunch menu.

Albin: It's not the chicken, Georges. It's the thought behind the chicken.

Georges: The what?? I shall go mad!

Albin: (*Crossing with ankle bracelets.*) Alright, Georges, my ankle bracelets. If you please.

Georges: You could put them on yourself if you didn't wear that iron lung of a corset.

Albin: *(Crossing away.)* And so we have it! The beans are at last spilt. The cat is out of her baggage. You used to love putting on my ankle bracelets.

Georges: *(Crossing to and kneeling to put on bracelets.)* I didn't used to have to.

Albin: Feeling trapped, my love? Is that what twenty years together adds up to? Where once there knelt a prisoner of love, now crouches a caged creature longing to be free?

Georges: We're in fine form tonight. Brava, Zaza!

Albin: It's all painfully clear! First, you start missing meals, then my ankle bracelets, then separate bedrooms!

Georges: *(Sitting on the sofa.)* She's been reading Colette.

Albin: And then the final blow: some young, thin brunette draped across my chaise, popping pills, puffing pot, rotting his brains out with rock and roll.

Georges: Albin, would you believe me if I told you there was no one else?

Albin: No. Pity me, betray me, but don't lie to me, Georges. Not after all these years

Georges: I swear it. There's only you!

Francis: *(Entering from the door)* Are you coming, Zaza? Mercedes is on her last verse.

Georges: What?

Francis: For the fourth time. *(He exits.)*

Georges: Albin, please. The show -

Albin: The show, the show. The show will go on. And so shall I. Alone, forsaken, abandomatta. Like a dog on a raft.

Georges: Like a what? On a what?

Albin: Like a dog on a raft.

Georges: Albin, you do know that there is no one else, don't you? And you know that there never has been. Don't you? *(Albin nods and Georges crosses to him and they hug.)* All right. Now go get dressed. Please. *(Albin nods sadly. Georges crosses to the door, blows Albin a kiss and exits. Albin goes up to the dressing room and the set opens into the dressing room.)*

Albin: So - the great Zaza goes back on stage... and Albin eats alone.