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Baba Yaga

By Mikhail Nozhkin

I think the Indian minority problem
is the closest we get to Vietnam.
What do you mean? It's
happening here. It's not over there.
No, no, but
look. The boys coming back-
Well, Guido,
you've proven something.
You really have demonstrated in your strip
that even funnies can be revolutionary.
Of course. Even Snoopy
in his own way is antiestablishment.
They reach very few people,
and those people already know
everything and they're in agreement.
Ah, what race is that, darling?
Oh, God, what a race.
Sandro let me try out the Suzuki.
Yeah, I admit it.
We had one hell of a ride.
You're a dear.
I want to photograph you
nude in a field of wheat.
Okay. We'll talk about it.
Thanks for the chicken.
Oh, are you drunk?
Oh, brother.
Valentina Rosselli-
she is a photographer.
Ciao, Arno.
Ciao.
A photographer?
Only publicity,
fashion, art, politics and news.
Haven't you ever heard
of Cartier-Bresson?
Sure. Cartier-Bresson.
It's a pseudonym.
Her real name is Valentina.
Well, look. Your only costs are your india
ink, and you can get that cheap enough.
But try filming a motion picture, and then
you'll really see what heavy costs are.
Look at Godard.

That guy makes a good example.
He proved that it isn't necessary-
Ah, Godard is Godard. What do
you think about it, Valentina?
Your guru hasn't done anything
of merit since Pierrot le Fou.
I'd much rather see Laurel and Hardy.
You can expect a laugh.
Is that all you like do
is laugh?
Are you going back to Milan tonight?
Yes, with Guido, if I can tear
him away from his comic books.
Would you give me a ride downtown?
Yes. But it's a sports car.
If you don't mind sitting on Arno's knees.
No, I want to walk.
But why? I haven't
done anything, have I?
Because I feel like walking.
Thanks for the offer.
Thanks for the ride, Guido.
Ciao. Ciao, Valentina.
Ciao, Arno.
Wait for me.
I'll be right back.
Look, be reasonable, will you? It'll
take you a half hour to get home on foot,
and it's already 3:00.
That's the nicest time of the day.
Foggiest time of the night.
I know, but fog turns me on, okay?
Is that the only thing
that turns you on?
I better go with you.
You shouldn't be alone at night.
Listen, Arno.
I don't feel like making love
with you... tonight.
Good night, Arno.
And go straight home!
A growing boy like you
needs his sleep.
Ciao!

Hey, Arno!
Your taxi's waiting.
Well, are you sure
you're ready?
I don't know if I'll
ever be ready for that chick.
Well, hello there, doggy.
And what are you doing out so late?
You should be home in bed.
What a strange mark.
Funny little thing.
What a funny ragamuffin
you are.
Good night, little dog.
Look out!
Oh!
I'm very distressed.
It's all right.
I don't understand
what happened.
It's nothing. It's my fault really.
I saw this little dog
in the middle of the st-
Come. Get in the car.
I'll drive you home.
Really, it isn't necessary. I live nearby.
Please.
Why, it's the least I can do
after the shock I've given you.
I won't take no for an answer.
All right.
It wasn't the dog.
What did you say?
I was driving too fast.
I had to. I knew that something
was about to happen.
Our meeting was preordained.
How did you know
this is where I live?
There are many things
that you'll want to know, my dear.
But not now.
Perhaps I'll be able to...
explain them to you... later.

But first- first I must be sure.

- Allow me.

- What-

Ooh. I apologize.

But I need a personal object of yours.

Be assured that I'll return it
to you tomorrow.

Good night, my dear.

And don't forget my name.

My name is Baba Yaga.

Ein!

Ein, zwei! Ein, zwei! Ein, zwei!

Ein, zwei! Ein, zwei!

Okay, I'm coming!

All right, I'm coming!

Morning, all. This is
your local sheriff speaking.

Very funny.

What time is it anyway?

Mm.

This may come as a bit of a surprise
to you, but it's almost noon.

Here, I'll make you some coffee.

Thank you.

God, am I sleepy.

Come in late last night?

Yes, but that's not it.

What is it then?

I had this nightmare last night.

What about last night?

It's nothing.

Did you get the paper?

Mm.

So what's new?

Mm, not a lot.

Your left-wingers are continuing
to blockade the schools in Milano.

You're a fascist.

And you're an idealist.

Let's go.

Hey, are you still there?

I can't hold this pose for too much longer.

Hmm? What?

Oh, I'm sorry. Well, what are

you waiting for? We're finished.
Good morning, my dear.
Am I disturbing you?
Uh, no.
We've just finished. Come in.
Bye-bye, Valentina. See you.
Bye. I'll see you tomorrow.
Well, now, my dear.
I've come to return this delightful
little object which I took from you.
May I put it back?
Stop it!
You can't do it.
I'm not wearing the belt now.
Oh. That is a pity.
Last night, you said
our meeting was preordained.
Preordained by whom?
There are forces which control
our actions and our feelings.
What forces?
It is too soon, Valentina.
It is too soon.
Ah.
Do you always work with this?
Yes. Well, it-it just
depends on the-
the kind of shot I'm after.
That's the eye.
The eye that freezes reality.
Well, I shall have to go now.
You must come... to my house.
Well, I don't
know. I'm really very busy these days.
Nonsense.
You must come to visit me.
I have a very old house.
You might find it interesting,
Valentina.
Here. I'll leave you my address.
Then may I count on it?
I'll come. Definitely.
Splendid.
Yes?

Valentina, this is A rno.
How was your walk last night?
It was fine.
Anything interesting happen?
Well, honey, I got 100,000
from an old man,
and then a pimp slapped me around
and took it away.
And while I was in jail, I was
raped by a dwarf. Is that enough?
Yeah, well, I'm
glad you had some fun, you know.
Hey, listen. I'm shooting
a TV show not far from your place,
and I was wondering - What were
we talkin' about before I got up?
Bring your camera over. Take
some shots. Oh, yeah. I remember.
We'll have some fun. You
remember that guy Jule-
Where are you?
Wait a second. I 'll ask.
Excuse me, ma'am.
Can you tell me where we are?
Where do you think we are?
We're in Milan.
Everybody's a comedian.
Of course it's Milano, but what the
hell's the name of the street, huh?
It's on via Moncucco, number 2.
Stay right on the Naviglio
and look for Alfredo's.
Via Moncucco, number 2. Take Porta
Ticinese and follow the Naviglio.
Okay, I ought to be there
in half an hour.
What is he doing?
Shh!
Hey, I got him!
Hey, he's a beauty, huh?
Mm.
Tell me, what on earth
are you going to do with it?
You'll see.

All right, my little friend.
Now we go to work.
There.
Okay?
A little more to the right.
There.
Good.
Now let me get my fingers back.
How's that?
Great. Can I shoot it?
Yeah. Go ahead.
Shit!
What's going on?
I don't know. It's jammed.
Did you get the shot?
I got a little bit.
Okay.
Tomorrow you come back, shoot
up some more footage on it, huh?
Right.
Are you going? You know, I only
got three or four shots of him.
No, that's enough.
Hey, listen.
Can you give me a lift to your place?
There's a subway station right near there.
All right, but you drive.
Okay.
What are you going to do
with that close-up of the rat?
I don't know.
Maybe I won't use it.
And then maybe I'll show it next to a
photo of some big industrialist, huh?
You think they'll let it pass
through uncensored? Mm-mmm. No.
But I can still show it
on a closed circuit, can't I?
In other words, instead of showing it
to a middle-class audience of 10 million,
you'll show it
to 10,000 intellectuals.
And not in the service of ecology,
but in the service of your own vanity.

If you don't use the means that the system provides, what other possibilities have you got? Revolution. Revolution.

And who starts it?

The union does, right?

Or intellectuals, writers... or movie directors.

You're talking about me, aren't you? Huh?

Hell, I'm only the little guy.

Today I shot a service on ecology.

And tomorrow I start a series of soap commercials.

You're nothing but an old whore.

That's true. And who isn't?

We're all whores of various species.

The only difference is that I'm a whore and admit it, while the majority are whores but play at being saints.

Believe me, Val, it's all a big farce, a game.

And contradiction is the number one rule.

Look, in some cases, contradiction is the only hope for salvation.

Yeah, you're right. And who should know that better than you?

Because to be frank, Val, you are a complete contradiction. You know that?

How so, for instance?

How so?

Pretty soon I'll be getting dropped off near your place.

And if you were consistent with your nature, you'd invite me up for a drink.

Oh, all right. Come on up.

You know what you're doing?

Am I disturbing anything?

You're not, fortunately.

Arno, meet Toni.

Hi.

Who's she supposed to be, Belle Starr?

Huh?

With a blast of that,
you get rid of your fat.
Well, if it works,
the girls will love you.
You know, I really thought you'd gone mad
when I saw that one yesterday.
What do you mean?
Didn't you notice, Val?
Why, she's madly in love with you.
- Don't be ridiculous, for God's sake!
- What are you talking about there?
Nothing.
How about these blanks?
Shall I put them in now?
Might as well.
Come on, let's get to work.
Okay.
Now shoot.
Toni, what is it?
I... can't breathe.
What is it? What the
hell's the matter with her?
Here.
Be careful.
Toni, what's wrong?
I don't know, Valentina.
I feel sick.
Would you like to go home?
Yes.
Do you feel up to it? Don't worry
about it. I'll take care of her.
I guess you'd better.
I'll get a taxi.
Hello?
Could you send a taxi to via Mascheroni
- I'm sorry, Valentina.
It's urgent. Yes, thank
you. You're wasting your day.
Don't be silly.
I always have enough things to do.
Just go home
and take care of yourself.
The taxi will be here in a
few minutes. That's quick.

Will you be here later?
I don't know.
I'll telephone you, huh?
Okay. Ciao.

ONE WAY:

I am so happy to see you,
my dear Valentina.
I was sure you would come.
Yes, uh-
I've come to ask you a favor.
I have to photograph
some jewelry, see, and I-
I wondered if you wouldn't mind
if I did it here.
Of course.
My house is at your disposal.
I'm rather lazy today.
Therefore,
I won't accompany you.
But you can go where you like...
and take as many photos
as you want.
Thank you.
Oh, what beautiful necklaces.
Please,
may I see them?
Ooh.
They're lovely to touch,
but even lovelier to hear.
Valentina!
You must not worry
about that hole, my dear.
That part of the house
needs some repairs.
You might find some interesting things
to photograph upstairs.
Valentina?
Valentina?
Aren't you feeling well, my dear?
Is there anything I can do for you?
No, thank you. I just had a dizzy
spell, but I'm all right now.
You've been too kind as it is.

Oh, nonsense.
I'm always alone here.
Your visit has given me
great pleasure.
In fact,
I want to give you
a little present.
Here.
This is Annette.
You must always
have her with you.
She will protect you
from any harm.
What do you mean?
There's nothing threatening me.
You never know, my dear.
You never know.
Why did I accept you anyway?
Of course you can't answer,
can you?
You're just a little doll,
aren't you?

GOD IS DEAD:

GOD IS DEAD:
NOW YOU KNOW!

GOD IS DEAD:
NOW YOU KNOW!
WHY DO YOU STILL GO TO CHURCH?
And I think those kids are only
doing what they think is right.
I DON'T LIVE HERE ANYMORE!
My God! What happened?
Carlo!
Carlo! Carlo!
Carlo! Carlo!
Somebody call a doctor!
What happened?
- We need help, please! Help me!
- Somebody do something!
Don't touch
him! Don't touch him!

- We must call an ambulance!
- Back up! Move!
- Somebody call an ambulance!
- Take it easy now. Take it easy.
Is he still breathing?
Somebody get some help!
- This is crazy!
- There may be a clue to who did it.
Hello?
Hey, hi and hello there.
Awoj u b i.
Am I late?
No, but I'd completely forgotten.
But it doesn't matter really.
Romina isn't here yet.
I hope she won't be too late, because I've got
a meeting at the university and it's important.
I think you're cutting your own throats
with that Third World jazz.
Those student meetings do nothing
but create problems instead of solving them.
And whatever made you think
you could trust Romina's punctuality?
- Hiya, people.
- Hmm? Hi, Romina.
What are we doing today, Val?
Sex and civil rights, honey.
No bras and black power.
Fascinating day.
How sexy.
With Brand X undergarments, folks,
no more hypocrisy,
no more false modesty...
and no more racial prejudice.
Mmm. Take off your shirt, Awojubi.
You can leave your pants on.
And I want you to forget that you have an
education and live in a civilized world.
You're overrating your university a little.
Very funny.
And now let me see
some nice, primitive drive. Okay?
Like your ancestors, you know - the ones in
the jungle that ate up the missionaries.

Oh, how lovely.
What a pretty doll.
Don't touch it!
But what's the matter?
I don't know.
There's something strange
about that doll.
Where did she come from,
Valentina?
I don't know.
Someone gave her to me.
I think I'll use another camera instead.
If you're ready, let's start.
Awojubi's in a hurry.
Okay, move toward her.
Okay. More toward her.
Sensually. Slowly.
Okay. That's great.
Just hold it.
That's beautiful. Beautiful.
Valentina] That's lovely.
Beautiful.
That's right.
Cross your right-
That's perfect.
He really turns you on.
That's it, kids.
Oh!
You know what, Awojubi?
I think the next time we do this,
we ought to make love for real.
It's okay with me, Romina.
How about right now?
No, thank you, Awojubi. The future
of the Third World is in your hands.
Right on.
Ciao, Valentina.
Ciao.
Ciao, Romina. See you
around, eh? More than likely.
What? Oh, damn.
A short circuit.
That's all we needed.
Mm! Ah, there.

I guess it wasn't a short circuit, Rom-
Oh!
Oh.
What's happened to you, Romina?
Oh, I'm all right.
I just got a little dizzy.
Isn't this weird?
I pricked myself with something. Look.
It's not even bleeding.
I wonder what it was.
Does it still hurt? No, not
really. Just burns a little.
Well, I'd better go.
I still feel a little dizzy.
Give me a call, will you,
when the photos are done.
Okay. I should have them tonight
or tomorrow at the latest.
Mmm, great. Ciao.
Arno, I have to talk to you
right away.
I'm waiting for you, Valentina.
No! No!
Oh, it's utterly fantastic!
How did you do it,
Captain White?
All right, Fred, now zoom in.
You see, all it takes is Netto-
the wonderful detergent
with the extraordinary action.
Get some in the morning.
Your dirty clothes will like its touch.
Stop. How was it for you?
All right. I'd like another one,
not so tight.
- Yeah. We'll make one more.
- Okay. Set it up.
Arno, you want to know
which ones were the good ones?
You were the good one.
What number do I use?
The same one. Just add an "A" to it.
Okay. You
know how to do them.

Well, well.
You guys take a break.
Valentina, what brings you
here? I must talk to you.
Has something gone wrong?
Everything's gone wrong.
Hey, Arno. We're all set to shoot.
Are you comin'? Huh?
You go ahead and shoot it.
You know what to do.
Okay. You're the boss.
Let's get moving.
And it all boils
down to this mysterious lady...
who would like to introduce you
to the delights of sapphic love.
So what? You give her a lovely curtsy
and you say, "Many thanks,
but I'd much rather make love
with my friend Arno. "
- Yeah. Yeah, I like that.
- You don't understand anything.
There's something different
about Baba Yaga.
It's as if she came from some other world,
a world subject to other forces.
Her eyes are so strange.
The big world is full of people
with strange eyes.
N o . N o t I i k e t h i s .
There's something else.
I don't know what it is.
I can't even imagine it,
and that's what scares me.
For example, that hole in her living room.
It doesn't just lead down to her basement.
There's no end to it. Don't you see?
Soon you'll be telling me
that it's the pearly gates of hell...
and your Baba Yaga
is the custodian witch of it.
How do you know she isn't?
Because it's mad. That's all.
Because we're living in the 20th century.

We're putting men on the moon,
transplanting organs.
Witches don't exist.
Listen, you're being a bit too naive.
Hell, Val, if it's anything,
it's the world we're living in.
And if it did exist,
I'll bet you with all those souls,
you can be certain that by now,
why, it certainly would have been
turned into some kind of supermarket.
Hmm?
If only I could-
But something happened today
when the lights went out.
I don't know what,
but there's something,
some detail that I can't pin down
that would help me understand.
Even if the idea scares me to death.
Understand what, Val?
Now look, you meet
an old lesbian, huh?
And a friend of yours
gets a headache.
All of a sudden,
it's sorcery and witches.
She's pale. Her hands are icy.
Listen, I have an old aunt in Treviso
who has two teeth like that, huh?
But that doesn't make her Dracula.
Oh, I don't know.
Maybe you could use a night out.
I have an idea that might help.
How about coming over
to the Cineclub, huh?
Really?
Uh-huh.
- What's playing?
- It's a series on German expressionism.
All right.
Anything's better than going home.
What's the matter? Are you
all right? Shh.

It's interesting, isn't it?
It's nothing. Sorry.
"The time has come!
The stars favor the casting of spells"
THE ART OF GIVING LIFE TO DEAD THINGS
"I have wrested the horrible reviving word
from the dark powers!...
Now I shall give life to the Golem!"
Come on. Let's go.
What's the matter? What is it?
Come on. Hurry.
Val?
Excuse me. Shh.
Val!
Will you please tell me
what the hell is going on?
I just thought of it. I remembered
the camera was on the table.
The shutter was closed.
And then the lights went out,
and when they came on,
it was near the doll
and the shutter was released.
So what? But don't you
see? Someone used it.
Someone took pictures with it
when all the lights were out.
But that's impossible.
They couldn't.
I know.
You see? The film's used up.
Are you certain you didn't use it all?
Positive. I loaded new film
while I was talking to Awojubi.
And then I remembered
all those coincidences-
Toni's illness, your camera jamming,
the death of that hippie kid.
And I thought this camera
had a curse on it.
So I used another
just to be on the safe side.
Well, we'd better develop it then, huh?
But if they were taken in the dark,

there won't be anything to see.

Are you sure?

Hmm?

No.

Let's try.

Hey. Is that the doll named Annette?

Yes.

Eh, not bad.

If she ever becomes
flesh and blood, call me.

I'll talk to her myself.

Oh, my God.

It's impossible.

What's Romina's number?

Hmm?

Hello? This is Arno Treves.

May I please speak to Romina?

A friend of Valentina's.

It's most urgent.

What?

I'm sorry.

Arno, is she dead?

Two hours ago.

Ein, zwei! Ein, zwei!

Ein, zwei! Ein, zwei!

Hello.

Good morning, my dear.

I wanted to tell you
that your camera is here with me.

If you want it back,
come and get it at once-
without waiting for your friend.

At once. Is that clear?

Valentina.

Your camera.

Why did you kill that boy?

And why did you kill Romina?

I?

I was not responsible for it.

That is meaningless, my dear.

There are forces which can
strike out at any moment.

These forces make use of us.

It is useless to oppose them.

I will oppose them!
You're very presumptuous.
Then, all you people are.
You think you hold the moon
in the palm of your hands,
but you don't even know
the secrets of your own Earth.
You will come with me, Valentina.
And you will know the secrets that men have
been trying in vain for centuries to know.
You will be rich and powerful.
You belong to me, Valentina,
so don't you forget it.
I've already demonstrated
that I can do with you as I like.
No!
I couldn't care less about power
and riches and your cosmic secrets.
And don't try to tell me
who to make love with,
because no man has ever done that,
let alone a woman.
What you want is of no importance.
You'll come with me
whether you like it or not.
Now go upstairs to the bedroom
and wait till you're summoned.
Valentina?
Valentina?
Valentina, where the hell are you?
Shit!
Damn it!
Arno!
Oh! Annette.
Annette.
No. No!
You see? I told you so.
Just what are you doing here?
And you didn't believe me either.
It's a long story.
There was a lady living
here. What lady?
What do you mean?
It's abandoned.

Why, didn't you hear what I said?

This place is gonna be torn down.

Abandoned?

There's a "For Sale" sign right outside
if you'd taken the trouble to look.

It's owned by the Alexander Realty Company, but, from
what I understand, they finally sold it to a large concern.

And rumors are they're going to put up
a supermarket right away.

Quiet!

Maybe we'd

better take a look around.

No!

Is there

anything down there?

Yeah.

A lot of dust.

Hey, look. There's an old doll's head.

You see, Sergeant.

I'm a photographer.

I needed some pictures
of a place like this.

Mm. At night?

All right, you may go now.

But tomorrow, I want you
to come by the station.

Of course,

Sergeant. We'll be happy to.

And thank you very much.

All right, let's go.

You know, I think it's pretty obvious
what those two were doing here, don't you?

Wait a second.

Aren't you going to arrest them?

It's your duty as officers of the law to protect
us citizens from people like those delinquents.