

**EAT A LOT AND EAT IT WELL**

**Sibylle Berg**

**A text for one or many**

**Translation: Ben Knight**

**Cast**  
1 man  
or many

The placement and use of the (choral) additional texts depend on the individual production.

A wise man said you should enjoy every moment as if it were your last.

Well,

I can understand what the statement means: your last breath, shrouds don't have pockets, you'll be carried out feet first -

etcetera.

Piss, as I like to end those proverbs - jokingly.

But

practically, I can't really imagine it. That not-being-here-anymore.

I can't imagine it in this light, in this mild light, with which this summer's day begins. Or ends, it's always just beginning or just ending, the summer, and how can I get out of it? Not smell any more earth, no more coffee in the morning, the boy marries, my wife's hair goes grey, her backside sags, cars driving without drivers - I mean, imagine - now the machines are even taking away our driving fun - and all that, without me.

It's pretty amazing, the fact that I keep hanging on to my individual presence on the Earth. I wouldn't even recognize myself in a sprawling crowd of humans. I have no idea what I look like as a person, so what is there that does actually mark me out if I can't definitely point to myself in a mass of people? I know that I exist because I have a flat and a key that fits in the door, and a family that calls me by my name, and colleagues who look forward to seeing me, every day.

Erm -

I know that I'm me, because I have photos in my possession that show a boy who people have told me is me. I know I exist because I see myself in the mirror - a healthy man. A man who works out, my hair is becoming a bit more transparent. My stomach musculature is well visible. Thanks to a hundred sit-ups a day. I can definitely say I've done everything right. Never cheated, hardly ever lied, never been unfaithful, I've done everything required of me. Gladly.

I've got a good life. A cancer-free life, I have all my limbs, I am. In the prime of my life. According to my income bracket I belong to a solid -

Well

I live in Europe.

And I haven't experienced war. At least no war that our descendants will be all hushed in awe about. There are a few little oppression battles happening out there. Aren't there? The middle class, the middle class people still producing something, against everyone else - but - I'm a happy person. Really

The

- what do you call it? - sun was in my face, I knew my wife and my son were nearby, I couldn't hear any sirens, and I had a plan for the day.

The quiet, apparently peaceful - day,

which knows how to attend on you - with a surprising absence of sound. Is this a holiday, maybe? What are we celebrating?

Well?

Eyes empty, corners of the mouth down, no answer - no one knows that anymore.

Apart from an awe-inspiring expertise in the field of self-marketing via the internet, no one has any actual knowledge anymore. Everyone wants an award for their presence on the planet. Everyone has this feeling they have the right to be treated well, because old people, i.e. me, have ruined the world apparently, with my equity funds - I laugh - with my exploitation of the ocean floor and my nuclear power stations, which I couldn't stop being built. Climate change and the immigrant integration crisis are my fault as well. Or is the politically correct term migrant crisis? Human people crisis?

Hi, I'm Robbie and I'm a social media expert. Well - actually I'm an intern, but I know all the Starbucks coffees off by heart, I'm constantly taking pictures of my stupid face, and I don't know which holiday it is today.

I'll tell you, you idiots. Today is the day the Lord spread the Holy Spirit over the world. But unfortunately there was a storm at the time.

Jesus Christ.

I can't get this song out of my head. Speaking of which I have to say -

I was the biggest Europe fan ever.

"The Final Countdown". A prophecy hidden in pop by Joey Tempest, the Aleister Crowley of popular music.

I know all the lyrics off by heart. I know the crisis off by heart too. Even though I would describe myself as an optimistic person.

The countdown is running: an hour and fifteen minutes to the big finale. I'm totally -

yeah -

This is going to be a surprise. My family won't understand what's happening to them when they get home, because they've had so little attention from me in the last few years.

"You don't even notice us," Claudia said. That's my wife. And Greg didn't say anything. He's my son. Now they won't be able to stop being amazed, and the little -

let's call them -

disagreements will -

sort of -

My family can always count on me. If one of them asks me for advice or needs help, I'm there. They know that.

But

I do have a deficit in the emotions column.

"You never show me that you love me," my wife always said. When she was standing next to me and the computer that I had to look at. Because -

And I answered, "I love my country too, don't I, but I don't get up every morning and, go, 'Good morning, my country, I still love you so much'."

Affection, or

devotion, or, erm, you know, well - feelings, are things you show through actions. Picking up litter on the country's streets or actually just the fucking duty of care for your offspring. But no one ever seems to notice that. Instead of saying, "Great, you feed us and provide security, and the oven is on, and the food is wonderful," they say things like, "You never bring me flowers." Why don't they marry an Interflora man or a conman bigamist who arrives at the door with a bunch of roses, and then they can all look at the dead vegetables after they've been left alone. But

Every accusation has a seed of truth in it.

I want to change, I do have

Erm, well - feelings

for my wife. It's just that I can't

adequately

well

I always want to say something to do with love, but then I start sweating, and my heart starts racing, and I feel so embarrassed. So

I leave it.

And, as a sign, a clear sign of how I'm changing, I'm going to prepare a delicious yet balanced menu.

Right, here we go. Quiet.

Before the actual cooking procedure begins I need a moment of silent concentration. Like a top athlete.

Wonderful.

The quiet.

And the sun in my new kitchen.

In my new, not-yet-paid-off kitchen, I should add wryly. A kitchen that friends enter and nod appreciatively.

This is the kitchen of an ambitious, semi-professional host.

By the way - after you're forty finding a new flat becomes pretty gruelling. I mean, you might die in it. Over-forties are always dying in their flats, and it's really hard to get corpses out of your property portfolio - isn't that right, you idiots? Another one of those meaningless professions, estate agent. A profession that no one needs. A profession for people whose only aim in life is to trundle across the Kenyan countryside in golf carts. And say, "Golf makes me feel so close to nature."

There's a bird outside.

That's pretty funny. No one actually believes that anymore, do they, that something without a gas mask actually - lives in the city. Fake birds, well, whatever floats your boat.

Fuck. That's what happens

when I get distracted by noises. I lose the - flow.

As Joey would say:

I guess there is no one to blame

We're leaving ground

Will things ever be the same again?

Just one more hour for my minutely planned - menu. I've -

Here -

Whoops, I'm always catching myself talking to myself out loud. Not because I'm lonely, but because I've started to think that I'm the only reasonable -

well

I've created a colour-coded system that includes the order of the ingredients in glass receptacles. It's gone on to inspire something in me that I like to call freestyle cooking. Wry smile. After the era in which everything was put in ironic speech marks, now you have to smile wryly all the time and send smileys to emphasize your sense of humour.

My sense of humour was always there. Even in the difficult moments. The death of my father. The death of my dog. The time I realized I didn't have a dog. Joke.

Even in the sad moments, I almost want to call it - on the b-side of my life, which I'd give the same title as the utterly unfairly maligned Europe anthem "On Broken Wings", I did not lose my sense of humour. The Germans have -

well

I have a sense of humour that hardly anyone understands. The room goes silent when I tell jokes and when I'm being funny my son starts crying.

Speaking of which - after Europe, I never discovered any other music that caught my inner rhythm so accurately.

### **The onion rings shimmer like mother-of-pearl.**

The onions are organic, from the organic supermarket, the concept store for people without chronic depression. The Stockhausen of food suppliers. I could shop myself to death there - over two thousand kinds of vegetable - that grow out of our ground. Unbelievable isn't it? You could feast your way through a mountain of products. I love organic supermarkets.

I love sunsets.

I love fairness.

I love my garden.

I love cooking.

But why bother, when there are pizzas made of waste products for the real scimpers or sushi. Sushi. Sushi.

Not that I have anything against foreign food, or against other cultures, it just takes a certain amount of concentration to allow something inside you if you don't know if it's still alive. I like things to be dead. There's nothing better than a good, organically produced tenderloin.

### **From my organic butcher.**

There's nothing better than a morning at a market with its typical - market smell - which reminds me of the old days. Of the age of obscurity. Of pointless rainy Sundays under the roof, with its veneered wood which in the rain smelled like the wet dog I never had. Football shirts and streamers, Europe posters and trainers. I grew out of all of it. In this house. And still my childhood was a part of me and the house was my skin. I never found a place I was more comfortable in. What I could see from the skylight was fields. Rooks. Fog. The word FREEDOM didn't mean anything to me yet, but I whispered it. I didn't know what I wanted, I just knew it had to be different.

Now everything has turned out different.

*Shut the fuck up out there!*

I think.

And they play music. Of course it's not enough they have an artificial bird, they have to play music too, they absolutely have to, fast, they could just have a second of silence, and then maybe they could listen to their thoughts or just the emptiness in their skulls.

### **The crème de leek needs pureeing.**

Probably any foodstuff makes us feel cosy if it smells of childhood. Or of infinity. I'm definitely a smell person.

My childhood

was fantastic. We had leeks growing in our garden. I appreciated them just as little as I appreciated my mother. Her intellectual side didn't interest me as a child. Usually I didn't even think about her. There were young people with working mothers. We thought that was embarrassing.

The fact that women certainly are capable of -

### **Violets. They give the soufflé a kind of - floral note.**

They produce

a melody -

*Which I can't fucking well hear when there's music blaring into my kitchen from outside!*

From my constantly changing neighbourhood, where curious Romanians meet life-loving young families who can afford the luxury of a loft apartment that also happens to be child-friendly. Classical music. Of course. People wanting to elevate themselves above the dull masses through the beauty of harmony. I laugh. Classical music and harmony, and I don't mean something like, erm, thingy, let's say - "The Magic Flute" - I mean, they listen to -

How am I supposed to concentrate when there's a so-called opera singer shrieking out there the whole time, and I have less than an hour until the first course gets served. A little elderberry soup. Not that easy to get fresh elderberries at the moment. I got imported ones, they smell a bit weaker than the native -

**Our good old native elderberry.**