

SIMUL TERMINUS
(the theatre piece)

SIMUL TERMINUS

A play by Eddy Van Ginckel

ISBN 9789402130423

© 2015 by Eddy Van Ginckel

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, at the address below. No public performance or reading of a protected play or part of that play may be given without prior authorisation.

Eddy Van Ginckel
Kroonplein 45
2170 Merksem
Belgium
Email: eddy.van.ginckel@telenet.be

SCENE 1

The recreation room in a home for the elderly. Not much comfort, a sofa, a few small tables, some chairs, an old radio on a small cupboard or an antique cabinet. A dusty television somewhere in a corner (nobody notices it) and a small gas-stove on wheels, easy to move around.

An old lady (87) enters, moves slowly towards a table in the middle. When she finally sits, she takes out her knitting, wool and pins, and starts to knit in silence.

After a while an old man enters, very laborious, with an antique walking-stick.

WOMAN

Good evening. *(he doesn't react)* You come to take a look in the recreation room? *(silence)* Well, it's not really a crowd in here. *(silence)* Actually, there's nobody here... but I think you noticed that, didn't you? You see, most of the residents prefer to stay in their room. Cosy, they say. Well, it's just a matter of choice. I prefer to sit here.

MAN

(not interested) Cosy...

WOMAN

After supper they light the stove and then it's pleasant in here. I love that. It's better to sit here, than to stay in my room. It's much colder in my room.

MAN

It's open all night?

WOMAN

All night? No, not all night. At ten o'clock they put out the lights.

(a long moment of silence, while the old man slowly walks towards the table)

You arrived today? *(no reaction)*

MAN

(points at a chair)

Is this chair free?

WOMAN

Is there someone on it?

MAN

(surlly) Good Lord... madame is a comedian. Very funny... My compliments.

(after a while he finally manages to sit down, very hard and difficult)

(a very long silence)

WOMAN

Lovely weather, huh?

MAN

You think so?

WOMAN

Last year it rained the whole month. If we had the same weather as last year, we had those rainy days again. I find it so sad. You can't go out for a walk. Well, you can go out if you want to. You can put up an umbrella. I don't like umbrellas. It's not pleasant walking with an

umbrella. Besides, even with an umbrella you'll get wet. Only your hair will stay dry. But all the rest... no, no, when it rains I won't go out. I'd rather stay in.

MAN

You mean it...

(again a very long moment of silence)

WOMAN

But it won't last.

MAN

What?

WOMAN

The drought, this dryness. It won't last. We're gonna get some rain.

MAN

Off we go...

WOMAN

I can feel it. Here. *(points at her hip)* I always get stitches. Here. That means that the rain is coming. *(silence)* You never have those?

MAN

What?

WOMAN

Stitches. Here. You never have those?

MAN

No.

WOMAN

I do.

(a long silence)

Sometimes these stitches are so terrible I could cry from the pain. I once broke it. This hip of mine. I broke it and since then this spot is oversensitive. Especially when the weather is changing. I mean, it became oversensitive. It never bothered me when I was younger. *(silence)* It comes with the age. When you're young, you're much stronger, I think. *(silence)* At least, that's the way it was in the old days. People are not that strong anymore. Young people, I mean. When we were young, we kept on going. They don't do that anymore. They catch a cold and they stay home for another fortnight. We just kept on going, fever or no fever.

MAN

You're gonna talk about nothing but sicknesses and diseases?

WOMAN

I beg your pardon?

MAN

If you continue talking about diseases, I'm off.

WOMAN

O no, sir. I can't stand people talking about diseases all the time. It gets me on my nerves.

(silence)

Was I really talking about diseases all the time?

MAN

Why you ask? (*cynical*) You don't remember?

WOMAN

Of course I do, of course...

MAN

Still okay in the head?

WOMAN

Don't do this.

(*very long period of silence*)

A few days ago, I saw a young girl crying. She cried because she missed the bus. The bus stops right here in front of the house. From my room you can see the busstop. She was sitting on that bench crying. Crying... I don't know why... the bus stops here every fifteen minutes, but this child couldn't stop crying. Now well, I say 'child', but actually she wasn't that young. Not in age, no. If you sit on a bench crying for no reason, you certainly look like a child. I think she was deeply in love. Yeah. I saw her a couple of times, with a young man. Always kissing, always sweet little kisses. But lately she sits there all alone, waiting for the bus. (*silence*) When you're in love, you don't know what you're doing. You lose all control. Did you ever had that feeling? (*silence*) No, not you. You didn't. I did. Several times. Well, not really that often of course. But I know the feeling. I once was so madly in love that I couldn't sleep at night. All I could think of was that boy. I just couldn't sleep. I couldn't eat either. (*silence*) Not very healthy, huh? (*long silence*) No. I couldn't eat. No hunger. Crazy, huh? You just live on love only. Wonderful diet. Did you know, I once lost thirty