

ACT ONE

The action unfolds in the suite of a five-star hotel. There may or may not be a door between the two connecting rooms. There should be a desk, a computer, a fax and a photocopier in one of the rooms. In the other one, there is a double bed and of course all the other furniture that you would expect to find.

Ahmet Gür, a twenty-eight-year-old man, is dressed very smartly and pacing from room to room. He looks nervous and lost in thought. It is as if his mood is changing from one moment to the next. He turns to the audience.

Ahmet Gür: I suppose now you'll be asking what's this man doing, pacing through the rooms. Today's a very important day, for me and my company. Business hasn't been too good for the last year. If I don't get an order today, I'm going to have to lay off two hundred workers at the end of the month. But what does that mean? It means falling; it means plunging head first... First it means downsizing; then it means sliding down the slippery slope to bankruptcy. What am I going to do?

(The phone rings. He answers.)

Hello, I'd asked for an assistant, she was going to wait on us and stay until my guest left. Look, I spoke to your boss about this yesterday for the umpteenth time, so now if you're asking me why, it's for the same reason! (Angrily.) Send her here immediately, and do me a favour: go and ask your boss for all the de-

show a late employee the door! That way they'll learn to be more punctual in future.

Ayşe: I think you are right, sir.

Ahmet Gür: So you're not sure, eh? You only "think" I'm right. What do I have to do to make you sure, I wonder.

Ayşe: I've just thought about it, and I don't *think* you're right anymore; I'm sure you are.

Ahmet Gür: (Angrily and sarcastically.) Thanks!

(Silence.)

Ahmet Gür: I'm going to ask you something. You know how I just said, "What do I have to do to make you sure, I wonder"? You can say it like that in Turkish, can't you?

Ayşe: I'm not sure I follow you, sir.

Ahmet Gür: Look, my Turkish isn't so good. You know why? Because I was in the States for fifteen years. It's as if I forgot my mother tongue.

Ayşe: (She does not answer. She just stares in front of her. After a short pause.) Is there anything I can do for you?

Ahmet Gür: (His anger has subsided.) Could you make me a coffee, please, black no sugar?

Ayşe: Of course sir, right away.

(Ayşe gets up and goes through to the other room. After a little while she returns carrying a tray with the coffee.)

Ayşe: Could I ask you a question?

Ahmet Gür: No! Talk about not taking the job seriously. First you're late... (To himself.) ...and now she wants to ask me a question. (He walks around a little in the room and stands in front of Ayşe.) OK then, fire away, what do you want to know?

Ayşe: How many guests are we expecting, sir?

Ahmet Gür: Oh, bravo, bravo! What do you do for an encore? Didn't your imbecile of a boss tell you that?

Ayşe: No, sir.

Ahmet Gür: And they say running a hotel is supposed to be about service! They send you over here, and you haven't got a clue what you've got to do!

Ayşe: I do have a clue, actually sir. It's just it might be lacking.

Ahmet Gür: Well, we're going to have something to eat here, we'll talk over lunch and we might have a little something to drink. You know, you should have been prepared a long time ago,

but now you're coming and asking me how many guests we're expecting!

Ayşe: But everything's been done, sir. I was just worried in case we'd forgotten anything. Forgive me for asking.

Ahmet Gür: (Angrily.) Will that be all, ma'am? Why the hell should I forgive you? I'm paying the hotel an arm and a leg...

Ayşe: You're right. Shout at me as much as you want; you're right.

Ahmet Gür: You work here, but you're understanding of the job is in need of... (He tries to find the right word.) ...in need of what? In need of repair!

Ayşe: Yes, sir.

Ahmet Gür: Yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir. (He suddenly remembers.) What did you want to ask me?

Ayşe: How many people will there be for lunch?

Ahmet Gür: Well, let me tell you. Two. Me and a Japanese businessman.

Ayşe: You see, my boss didn't tell me that. He merely told me to come to this room.

Ahmet Gür: You said "merely". What does "merely" mean?

Ayşe: "Merely" is a bit of an old-fashioned word, sir. It means "only".

Ahmet Gür: Good, good. Keep using words like that so I can learn something from you.

Ayşe: All right, sir.

Ahmet Gür: So let's say that first of all, your boss isn't up to the job. He merely gave you the room number and sent you here. He should have told you who I was, what I was, who was going to come, what we were going to eat before. Shouldn't he?

Ayşe: You're right, sir. I wonder about all of those things, but I don't like to ask. I don't like to make you angry. I heard something like this in a play once:

*A good employee doesn't need to ask
A wink and a nod is enough.*

Ahmet Gür: Well done! You said it very well. So, you go to the theatre?

Ayşe: Yes, sir.

Ahmet Gür: I really liked what you just recited. (He takes a small notebook out of his pocket.) Now, say it again. I'm going to write it down.

Ayşe: (Repeating.)

*A good employee doesn't need to ask
A wink and a nod is enough.*

Ahmet Gür: Good, I'm going to have it engraved and put it up at the entrance of the company.

Ayşe: I'm glad you liked it, sir.

Ahmet Gür: Now, let me tell you why we're here. My father has—or rather had—a textile factory. Wait, I should start from the beginning: when I was fourteen, my father sent me to the States. I went to middle school and high school over there. Then I went to college and studied business management. You know that college means university in America, don't you?

Ayşe: Yes, I had heard, sir.

Ahmet Gür: Anyway, when I left college, I started my masters in business management. My mum would send me lots of money, and I was travelling and studying at the same time. A lot of my friends were working, but I was travelling. The life of Raleigh as they say.

Ayşe: You can also say, the life of Reilly.

Ahmet Gür: Ah yes, that's it. Anyway, let me continue. I left college and I asked myself if I was going to go back to Istanbul just to get on my father's nerves. So I never came back.

- Ayşe: Studying abroad is such a good thing, isn't it, sir?
- Ahmet Gür: It undoubtedly has its advantages. As long as you don't do act like a scumbag, you know, as long as you don't do drugs or anything like that. It's good if you actually study.
- Ayşe: All right, sir, now you're here, that means that you're back.
- Ahmet Gür: Yes, I'm back in Istanbul, for better or for worse. Some bastard crashed his car into my father. He was killed instantly, and I came back for the funeral.
- Ayşe: I'm so sorry, sir.
- Ahmet Gür: Thank you.
- Ayşe: Your mother must have been really upset.
- Ahmet Gür: She came to meet me at the airport. You should have seen how she hugged me!
- Ayşe: It's so sad.
- Ahmet Gür: Ah, I don't know why I'm telling you all this...
- Ayşe: Everyone needs to pour their heart out sometimes.
- Ahmet Gür: You're right.

(Silence.)

Ayşe: You're having lunch with a Japanese businessman, aren't you, sir?

Ahmet Gür: Yes, and we're going to talk over lunch. This Jap, he's a very good businessman, but he's a complete swine too! You know, all good businessmen are swine. Otherwise they would not be good businessmen...

Ayşe: Lots of businessmen come here, to this hotel, I mean.

Ahmet Gür: And what do you think about them?

Ayşe: I always think the best of them, sir.

Ahmet Gür: Yes, keep thinking that. Now where was I? Ah yes, my father was killed in a car crash. My mum told me over the phone and I came back to Istanbul the same day, yes, it was his funeral the next day. I was in shock the whole time.

Ayşe: I can understand how devastated you must have been.

Ahmet Gür: Shock and devastation because we've got five hundred people working in the factory and all five hundred of them turned up at the funeral. They shut up the factory that day. Even the security guard left his post so he could come.

Ayşe: They must have really loved your father, I mean their boss.

Ahmet Gür: Loved him, or did they just make the most of the opportunity... maybe they were just skiving off; anyway, it's between them and their consciences now.

Ayşe: Everything's doable, sir.

Ahmet Gür: Everything's possible, isn't it?

Ayşe: Yes, sir.

Ahmet Gür: And that's the quirk of business life: everything's possible!

(The telephone rings.)

Ahmet Gür: If that's them calling to ask something about the service, I'll shove the bloody phone down their throats! You answer it, see what they want.

Ayşe: (Picks up the phone.) Hello, yes, Mr Gür is here. You're calling from the company? About your guest? I'll let him know, what would you like me to tell him? (She listens for a moment.) One moment, please, I'll let Mr Gür know just now.

Ahmet Gür: (Impatiently.) What is it? What are they calling about?