

LOL'S STORY CART.

THE MINSTREL

LOL

Lili floats in a dinghy first launched in a faraway land. A Romany, she possesses nothing but her guitar and voice, with these she can survive. Early one morning she is landed, among razor wire and grave pits, in a town that is dying. She does not know this. It looks to her a wealthy place.

Lily hides her dinghy among rocks.

LOL

Every town has its centre, its square, where business meets the church and government and where the idle drink and watch. Me, I'm with the idle every day.

Lili lays down her scarf, sits on it and plays.

LILI

(Sings.)

Sa me amala oro khelena
Oro khelena, dive kerena
Sa o Roma daje
Sa o Roma babo babo
Sa o Roma o daje
Sa o Roma babo babo
Ederlezi, Ederlezi
Sa o Roma daje

Sa o Roma babo, e bakren chinen
A me, chorro, dural vesava
Romano dive, amaro dive
Amaro dive, Ederlezi

E devado babo, amenge bakro
Sa o Roma babo, e bakren chinen
Sa o Roma babo babo
Sa o Roma o daje
Sa o Roma babo babo
Ederlezi, Ederlezi
Sa o Roma daje

LOL

Now who comes along? Who would we like to meet Lili?

Conrad has been listening. He approaches her. Gestures.

CONRAD

This song is yours? This voice is yours? This face also. You understand? Parle vous Francais? Italiano? Russe? No speak?

LILI

No speak.

CONRAD

Yet you sing.

Conrad mimes – You are hungry?

Lili nods – yes yes yes.

A table, a chair, Claudio brings food, she eats.

CONRAD

You have people? A place to stay?

He mimes sleep. She shakes her head – no.

LILI

No place.

CONRAD

Yes yes. Conrad. Me. I have place. Hotel. Good for you.

LILI

Good. Good for. Conran hotel.

CONRAD

No not- yes, whatever, fine. My hotel , I buy it for pennies. The owner, he is sick, broken, gives me the deeds for the price of a decent funeral. Or they just throw you in hole with everyone. Why it matter, all the same, people are strange. I like you. I can talk to you. I can tell you anything.

LILI

Tell me.

CONRAD

I hurt. You cannot understand. I tell you and am absolved. A great gift. In return, I fix you up. Food.

LILI

Food.

CONRAD

Claudio!

CLAUDIO

Snappy snacks.

Claudio brings more food, she eats.

CONRAD

A roof. Clothes. Bed.

LOL

Now we get to it.

CONRAD

You sing. Voice, face, an angel. I fix you.

LILI

I broken?

CONRAD

We need a name.

LILI

My name.

CONRAD

It must be simple, but with many meanings. One word that captures womanhood and all its spells and charms, the mythic meaning to be a woman, which we all understand whoever wherever, which tells of your sex but also that you are beyond sex, the greatest of women-

CLAUDIO
Madonna!

CONRAD
Perfect.

CLAUDIO
Been done.

Claudio whips away the table. Lili is now sitting on the edge of a hotel bed.

LILI
Lili.

CONRAD
Lili.

LILI
My name. Lili.

CONRAD
I like.

LILI
My name.

CONRAD
Take off your clothes.

LILI
My-

Conrad grabs his clothes.

LILI
Oh.

CONRAD
No. No. Not that. I can have that. We have to fix your image.

LOL
Conrad dresses and undresses Lili like a doll, trucks meant for medicines bring in the fashions and fabrics of the world, from the street to haute

couteur, until under Conrad's keen eye he creates for Lili a wholly original and radical new look.

Lili stands in ribbons, ringlets, bangles, fishnet and leather, dark eyes, bright lips and big hair. In fact, it's Madonna circa 1982.

CONRAD
You like?

LILI
No.

CONRAD
You get used.

LILI
I get used?

CONRAD
Show me. You walk.

LILI
Walk?

CONRAD
Sure. Up down. Is good. Not so. More so. I show.

He stops her, shows her how to walk.

CONRAD
With hips. See? Hips. Is good.

LILI
No.

CONRAD
No understand. Hips, tits, lips. Yes?

LILI
No.

CONRAD
Yes. The answer is yes. Or I shit out your eyeballs.
Don't worry, is Chechen saying. Yes?

LILI

Yes.

CONRAD

Good. Baby, Lili, why you cry? Look at me. Look. Look. I am on my knees to you baby Lili. Look my eyes. What see? The man who loves you. See? My beating heart it aches for you.

His hand on his chest. She moves it to the left side where his heart is.

CONRAD

Want only good for my baby Lili. The world is your cockle. We seize it, together.

LILI

We seize cockle.

CONRAD

Together. You are talent, star. I your servant. I fix it. This image, you must own, make yours, make you. And maybe, later, more.

LILI

More than cockle?

CONRAD

But now, focus, make Lili you, make Lili completely you.

LILI

Lili is me.

CONRAD

That's good. You understand perfect. We launch you at Claudio's. No worry. Low profile, audience by invite. It is history in making.

LILI

His story?

CONRAD

I have written song for you.

LILI

I have songs.

CONRAD

But this for you, for Lili, special. You learn.

Claudio sets tables.

CONRAD

You learn, you sing.

LILI

Your song.

CONRAD

Our song. Our love.

Conrad puts his fist on his chest, she moves it to the left side where his heart is.

CONRAD

Friends. Ladies. Peoples. Welcome to 'Burnsea's Got Talent'. I give you...Lili! You sing, how I show you it.

LILI

(Sings.) Baby, baby, gonna make you,
Baby, baby, gonna take you,
Baby, baby, gotta say it,
Baby, baby, Couldn't fake it if I tried,
Such a feeling here inside,
Baby take me for a ride,
We're gonna fly...

She puts down her guitar, throws off her bracelets and bangles.

CONRAD

What is matter?

LILI

Stupid.

CONRAD

Ladies gentlemen please have drinks on the house, performance to be resumed. Lili look at me, I am on my knees to you, begging you, please you must finish this performance. Everyone who is anyone in Burnsea has come tonight to hear you, I have

promised them something special, this is a big night for you.

LILI

The bracelets stop me from playing, they hit the strings.

CONRAD

Lili, you will need to learn to sing in all kinds of circumstances, it is what people do, they dance, they play instruments, they assume very difficult yoga asanas.

LILI

They what?

CONRAD

That's entertainment.

LILI

I do only one thing. I sing.

CONRAD

Then please sing, Lili, sing for me.

LILI

My songs.

CONRAD

You don't like my songs? Yes, yes, whatever songs you like.

LILI

Songs of my people.

CONRAD

Please Lili, just sing the way you did the day I first heard you.

Lili throws away her earrings, her shoes, ties up her hair.

CONRAD

Still I love you.

Lili moves his hand to where his heart should be. She picks up her guitar and sings.

LILI

(Sings.) Auschwizate hi kher baro
odoi besel mro pirano
besel, besel, gondinel
the pre mande pobisterel

O, tu kao ciriklo, lidza mange mro liloro
lidza lidza mra romnake
hoi some phando Auschwizate

Auschwizate bokha bare
the so te hal amen nane
ani koda kotor maro
o blokaris bi-bahtalo

LOL

What song this? Where's it come from? Not in my
repertory. Lili's singing that night sends splinters
into the heart of everyone who hears her. She
sings. She sings. I don't know how. I did not do
this. All are touched, and none forget. And
Conrad learns finally where his heart is.

Lily drags her dinghy from its hiding place, throws her guitar into it, and
pushes off with her paddle, drifting away from shore with the outgoing tide.

LILI

This land is not for me.

CONRAD

Whatever land I am in, I can only make it more
mine.

LOL

He learned, as we all do, by having it broken.