

THE RUB
by Albi Gorn

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARIEKE, somewhat Bohemian

JEFF, somewhat a jock

(Monday. An office. MARIEKE sits at her computer console. JEFF enters. He stops and looks at her, smiles in a way that indicates he's just made a connection, and then sits at his computer)

MARIEKE: *(Looks at him with a mysterious smile)* Hi.

JEFF: Morning.

MARIEKE: *(She is suppressing a giggle, taking peeks at him)* Morning.

JEFF: *(To computer, which is not responding)* Hello, Jeff to hard drive, do you read me?

MARIEKE: The network's down.

JEFF: Okay. Free Cell, Minesweeper or Hearts?

MARIEKE: You can access the program, you just won't have last week's numbers.

JEFF: And?

MARIEKE: Oh, right, you haven't gotten to the end of the month yet.

JEFF: Yeah, I've just been working here the one week.

MARIEKE: Well, you have to do these reports and —

JEFF: Right, right, I remember Kristof telling me. I can do those now?

MARIEKE: You can do last week's.

JEFF: Oh. Good. So that's —

MARIEKE: *(Going over to him and standing behind him with her hand on his hand on the mouse)* Here, and down here and —

JEFF: Great, thanks.

MARIEKE: *(She goes back to her chair)* Start with the totals and work backwards.

1 JEFF: Otherwise I'm screwed.

2 MARIEKE: Exactly.

3 JEFF: Okay, good. Thanks, uh, Brel?

4 (MARIEKE reacts strongly to being called Brel. She is completely astonished and just

5 stares at Jeff)

6 JEFF: It's not Brel, I know that. Sorry, I'm terrible with names.

7 MARIEKE: Why did you call me Brel?

8 JEFF: I don't know. I thought for a second that was your name. Sorry. What is your

9 name?

10 MARIEKE: Marieke.

11 JEFF: Oh, yeah. Nice name, I don't know where I got Brel from. (MARIEKE is still in

12 disbelief) Sorry, I seem to have hit a tender spot.

13 MARIEKE: Oh, no. I guess it's just my name and Jacques Brel and —

14 JEFF: Who?

15 MARIEKE: Jacques Brel. You never heard of Jacques Brel?

16 JEFF: No.

17 MARIEKE: This is too weird. Don't you think this is weird?

18 JEFF: (Confused) Still processing.

19 MARIEKE: Why did you call me Brel?

20 JEFF: Just popped into my head. I'm not good with names and I, I — I don't know. I

21 think I probably apologized enough, can you suggest another approach?

22 MARIEKE: Look, I —

23 JEFF: I mean you look really hurt or something.

24 MARIEKE: No, no.

25 JEFF: Was this Jack some bad boyfriend or something?

1 MARIEKE: Jacques, no, he's a songwriter and he wrote a song called Marieke that my
2 parents loved and named me after. *Aye, Marieke, Marieke* — you never heard that song?

3 JEFF: Nope. Man, that is weird.

4 MARIEKE: Yeah, but what's really weird. I should tell you this. See — no, I better
5 not. (*Back to computer screen*)

6 JEFF: Oh, no. You can't do that.

7 MARIEKE: Sorry, that was — okay. See, I dreamed about you last night.

8 JEFF: Wow, I —

9 MARIEKE: And, uh, in the dream you called me Brel, like you just did. Oooh, I just
10 got goosebumps.

11 (*Now JEFF is staring at MARIEKE in amazement*)

12 MARIEKE: What?

13 JEFF: I can't believe you just said that.

14 MARIEKE: Why?

15 JEFF: (*Long beat*) I dreamed about *you* last night.

16 MARIEKE: (*Beat*) Now you're making fun of me.

17 JEFF: No. I dreamed about you and I called you Brel. And I didn't want to say that
18 before, but that's why I called you Brel today.

19 (*MARIEKE just looks at him skeptically*)

20 JEFF: It's true. We met in Paris, on the Left Bank.

21 MARIEKE: (*She becomes more wide-eyed and astonished*) I saw you and thought you
22 were German.

23 JEFF: I saw you and thought you were Italian.

24 MARIEKE: We didn't speak, and then a young man sat between us.

25 JEFF: (*Now JEFF is astonished*) An artist —

26 MARIEKE: With a goatee —

1 JEFF: Drew a sketch —

2 MARIEKE: I thought he was drawing you —

3 JEFF: And I thought he was drawing you —

4 MARIEKE: But when we looked at the sketch —

5 TOGETHER: It was the two of us, together.

6 MARIEKE: Oh my God.

7 JEFF: I got those goosebumps now.

8 *(Beat)*

9 MARIEKE: Uh, Jeff?

10 JEFF: Yeah.

11 MARIEKE: Does that mean...I need a moment.

12 JEFF: Me too.

13 MARIEKE: How...*(MARIEKE and JEFF look at each other, struggling with what to*
14 *make of this)*

15 JEFF: Maybe we should go back to the reports.

16 MARIEKE: Good idea. *(MARIEKE returns to working; as does JEFF)* The network is
17 back up.

18 JEFF: So we're connected now. Do we have to reboot?

19 MARIEKE: I think we better

20

21 — end of scene —

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23

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25

1 *(Tuesday. JEFF is at computer. MARIEKE enters)*

2 MARIEKE: Good morning. *(Sits at her computer)*

3 JEFF: Good morning.

4 MARIEKE: *(After a beat as they work)* Venice?

5 JEFF: Yep. That funky bridge?

6 MARIEKE: The Bridge of Sighs.

7 JEFF: Unbelievable.

8 MARIEKE: Ohgodohgodohgod.

9 JEFF: Oh man, this is — oh man.

10 MARIEKE: *(Breathing deeply)* I mean, this is — *(still not sure)* the gondola guy with

11 the saxophone?

12 JEFF: Uh-huh. Then it was like one of those baby accordions. What do you call —

13 MARIEKE: A concertina.

14 JEFF: Right, a concertina. This is incredible.

15 MARIEKE: I know, I know. I can't wait to go back to sleep.

16 JEFF: Why do you think this is happening?

17 MARIEKE: *How* is it happening is what I would like to know.

18 JEFF: Maybe, you know, when two people — I'm not saying we are, obviously, but

19 maybe this is telling us we are.

20 MARIEKE: Uh-huh, maybe.

21 JEFF: We should find out.

22 MARIEKE: Uh-huh.

23 JEFF: You sound hesitant.

24 MARIEKE: No, I'm not. It's just that maybe we are finding out, you know, each night.

25 JEFF: Hmmm, maybe we are. *(Starts humming My Dreams Are Getting Better All The*

26 *Time)*

1 MARIEKE: (*Joining in*) That's it. That's the music from the glass factory. What is
2 that?

3 JEFF: I don't know. It sounded like cartoon music.

4 MARIEKE: Yeah. Sure didn't sound particularly Italian.

5 JEFF: Weird, isn't it? There we are locked in a storage closet —

6 MARIEKE: Sorry about that. I was so sure that was the exit.

7 JEFF: — when out of nowhere music starts playing. You don't know where it's from,
8 but because it's a dream it doesn't matter.

9 MARIEKE: That's what makes it so romantic. (*Beat*) You pick good spots.

10 JEFF: I pick? Oh. Well, thanks.

11 MARIEKE: I can't wait to see where you take me tonight.

12 JEFF: Speaking of which —

13 MARIEKE: Yeah?

14 JEFF: Don't you think we should get together?

15 MARIEKE: Well, I —

16 JEFF: I don't mean, you know, Venice. Have dinner, see what this is all about.

17 MARIEKE: Yeah, I do. I just wonder —

18 JEFF: Me too, if that would somehow make it stop happening.

19 MARIEKE: Yeah. But we should have dinner, I want to, I want to have dinner.

20 JEFF: Good. Tonight's not good for me.

21 MARIEKE: Oh, and tomorrow is the meeting.

22 JEFF: Oh, right. I'm glad you reminded me. Thursday?

23 MARIEKE: My sister will be in town. Friday?

24 JEFF: Sure, Friday. And that's three more nights of dreaming.

25 MARIEKE: Great.

26 JEFF: Where would you like to go?

1 MARIEKE: I don't care. Maybe we'll find out tonight.

2 JEFF: Maybe.

3 *(They both smile broadly as they continue to work and at the same moment humming the*

4 *song again, stop, look at each other and laugh)*

5

6 — end of scene —

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8

1 (*Wednesday. MARIEKE is at the computer. JEFF enters. He stops as soon as he sees*
2 *her with a huge, foolish grin on his face. MARIEKE doesn't look back at him but is also*
3 *smiling, trying to contain her glee. Finally*)

4 JEFF: Wow. (*Beat, then bigger*) WOW!

5 MARIEKE: Good morning, Jeff.

6 JEFF: Wowwowwow!

7 MARIEKE: Is that all you're going to say?

8 JEFF: You were —

9 MARIEKE: Uh-huh. So were you.

10 JEFF: That was fantastic, it was — (*can't find the word*)

11 MARIEKE: Wow?

12 JEFF: Very wow. (*Beat*) Wow.

13 MARIEKE: I liked that restaurant.

14 JEFF: Yeah, it was good. How were the mussels?

15 MARIEKE: I don't know. By the time I got to them they were chocolate fudge donuts.

16 JEFF: (*Distraught*) Oh.

17 MARIEKE: What's wrong?

18 JEFF: That didn't happen in my dream.

19 MARIEKE: It did.

20 JEFF: No, I don't remember that at all. Maybe we're —

21 MARIEKE: It happened, it happened. See, when I dreamed it — when *we* dreamed it,
22 I didn't want you to see me eating donuts because of my weight, so that's how we
23 dreamed it. So you wouldn't see it.

24 JEFF: Oh. I dreamed something that I didn't see?

25 MARIEKE: Yeah. *We* did.

26 JEFF: Oh. Anyway —

1 MARIEKE: I know, I know. Wow.

2 JEFF: Wow. (*They smile at each other, sigh deeply in tandem, and then both turn to*

3 *their screens and start to work. After awhile JEFF takes a look at MARIEKE, eyeing her*

4 *up and down*) Weight?

5 MARIEKE: Excuse me?

6 JEFF: You don't have a problem with your weight.

7 MARIEKE: Oh, please. I mean that's sweet to say, but really, it's a constant battle.

8 JEFF: But (*indicating her figure*) you don't —

9 MARIEKE: It's the way I dress, covering it up.

10 JEFF: Oh. (*Beat*) But I've seen you undressed.

11 MARIEKE: When? (*JEFF smiles impishly*) Oh, yeah. (*They both resume work but*

12 *MARIEKE is somewhat lost in thought*) But how do we know?

13 JEFF: Know what?

14 MARIEKE: That what you see and what I see are the same.

15 JEFF: Well, it's checked out so far. (*Troubled*) Except for the donuts.

16 MARIEKE: Stop worrying about the donuts. Trust me, they were there. But the

17 dreams. It's like anything, really, the yellow on this pie chart (*indicating the computer*).

18 How do we know that yellow looks to me like it looks to you.

19 JEFF: Hmmm. What difference does it make?

20 MARIEKE: I guess what's worrying me is how do we know that when you saw me —

21 JEFF: Naked.

22 MARIKE: Undressed, that you saw the real me, the me the way I see me — assuming

23 that's the real me.

24 JEFF: Hmmm. (*Beat*) Did you think you looked fat in the dream?

25 MARIEKE: I'm just asking. How do we know? See, I wouldn't want us to be

26 disappointed when — I guess I mean, *if* it comes to that.

1 JEFF: Oh. I don't think I will be. I'm not that particular.

2 MARIEKE: Uh-huh. *(Beat)* I am.

3 JEFF: Oh. About your weight?

4 MARIEKE: About my weight and other things.

5 JEFF: Other things you saw in the dream?

6 MARIEKE: Uh-huh.

7 JEFF: *(Beat)* My things?

8 MARIEKE: I'm just saying. How do I know that, you know —

9 JEFF: *(A serious beat and then a big, smug smile)*

10 MARIEKE: *(Beat, and then MARIEKE mouths "wow")*.

11

12

— end of scene —

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14

1 *(Thursday. JEFF is working. MARIEKE enters, stops and starts singing)*

2 MARIEKE: *Stand by your man.*

3 JEFF: Good morning.

4 MARIEKE: *(Slightly anxious)* Stand by your man? Tammy Wynette?

5 JEFF: *(Big smile)* “Another margarita, garçon.”

6 MARIEKE: *(Relieved. Sitting)* Isn’t it incredible?

7 JEFF: Incredible. More than incredible. It’s like unbelievable.

8 MARIEKE: Have you told anyone?

9 JEFF: Who would believe it?

10 MARIEKE: Exactly. I haven’t told anyone.

11 JEFF: And last night, I mean in the dream last night —

12 MARIEKE: Yeah?

13 JEFF: I mean, considering the dream the night before.

14 MARIEKE: I know, I know. That was what made it so special. We were meeting for

15 the first time and we got to fall in love all over again.

16 JEFF: Yeah.

17 MARIEKE: Fall in love in the dream, I mean.

18 JEFF: Right, of course. In the dream. See, but we already fell in love in Tuesday’s

19 dream.

20 MARIEKE: Exactly. And that’s the best part, isn’t it, the falling in love.

21 JEFF: It is. Definitely the best part. *(Beat)* Too bad it can only happen once.

22 MARIEKE: *(Beat)* Well, I mean, it’s happened four times already this week.

23 JEFF: In the dreams.

24 MARIEKE: Right, in the dreams.

25 JEFF: But really, in real life, it only happens once.

26 MARIEKE: Hmm.

1 JEFF: (*Beat*) Who was that guy?

2 MARIEKE: Craig? He's just an ex.

3 JEFF: So he said.

4 MARIEKE: He pops up in my dreams a lot. He pops up in my life a lot.

5 JEFF: Uh-huh.

6 MARIEKE: There's nothing to be jealous about.

7 JEFF: It's a dream. Of course I'm not jealous of a dream.

8 MARIEKE: He doesn't even look like that. Somehow he always looks great in my

9 dreams. In real life he looks more like Danny DeVito.

10 JEFF: Oh. Okay. So you like country music?

11 MARIEKE: Not really.

12 JEFF: Oh. Then why did you go to that club?

13 MARIEKE: (*Shrugs her shoulders*) No idea. We were just there and then Craig spilled

14 my drink —

15 JEFF: The margarita.

16 MARIEKE: Right. And the cowboy with the swastikas came over.

17 JEFF: With the pit bull wearing the Yankees cap.

18 MARIEKE: And so...I don't know why I was there. Why, do you like country

19 music?

20 JEFF: Uh, yeah, a little. I mean, a lot really.

21 MARIEKE: Oh. (*They sit looking at each other in silence for a few seconds, then both*

22 *start to work. After awhile*)

23 JEFF: Do you usually drink that much?

24 MARIEKE: It wasn't that much.

25 JEFF: Eight drinks? Six shots?

1 MARIEKE: You can't get drunk on those things, particularly the way they water them
2 down at clubs.

3 JEFF: Hmmm.

4 *(They continue working. JEFF starts humming Stand By Your Man,*
5 *mostly to himself)*

6 MARIEKE: Uh, Jeff.

7 JEFF: What?

8 MARIEKE: I have trouble concentrating when you do that.

9 JEFF: Oh, sorry.

10 *(They work a little longer in silence)*

11 MARIEKE: I liked what you said.

12 JEFF: When?

13 MARIEKE: At the subway stop, when the F train was about to pull out. "Brel —" I
14 love that you still call me Brel. "Brel it doesn't take much to see that the problems of
15 three little people don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world." He was so great.

16 JEFF: Who, Craig?

17 MARIEKE: Bogey, in *Casablanca*.

18 JEFF: That's from *Casablanca*?

19 MARIEKE: That's just another thing we have going for us. That's one of my favorite
20 films too.

21 JEFF: Never saw it.

22 MARIEKE: *(Beat, astonished)* You never saw *Casablanca*?

23 JEFF: No. I don't watch anything in black and white.

24 MARIEKE: *(Somewhat crestfallen)* Oh. But then how could you know that speech?

25 JEFF: Beats me. I mean I'm not the only person dreaming, get my point?

1 *(Friday. JEFF and MARIEKE are both sitting working in silence. They both look angry)*

2 JEFF: My best sweater.

3 MARIEKE: What idiot wears good clothing to Blue Man Group?

4 JEFF: What kind of stupid place was that to meet, Miss Romance?

5 MARIEKE: It's a dream. I didn't pick it.

6 JEFF: Well, I certainly didn't pick it; I never heard of them before.

7 MARIEKE: That figures. They've only been playing there for like twenty years.

8 JEFF: For that I missed Yankees/Red Sox, game 7.

9 MARIEKE: Oh, that would have been really romantic.

10 JEFF: Like you introducing yourself to me? Talk about romance. *(Mimicking)* "Excuse

11 me, do these jeans make me look fat?"

12 MARIEKE: And I will always treasure your response. *(Mimicking)* "Not at all. I'd do

13 you in a heartbeat." Like I would even think of touching you with all that gook on you.

14 And *that* was your favorite sweater? It looked like something you picked up at a closeout

15 of Pee Wee Herman collectibles.

16 JEFF: It has nostalgic value.

17 MARIEKE: You're not supposed to have nostalgia after you meet me.

18 JEFF: Now I can never wear it again.

19 MARIEKE: What are you talking about? Nothing happened to it except in that stupid

20 dream.

21 JEFF: That's exactly right. Something happened to it in that stupid dream. And if I

22 were to ever wear it again it would remind me of that stupid dream. As if I'll ever need

23 reminding.

24 MARIEKE: And I want you to know one other thing. I don't consider abortion an

25 option.

1 JEFF: And that was the most ridiculous — how could you know? I was still zipping
2 up.

3 MARIEKE: I was definitely pregnant.

4 JEFF: You can't know that fast.

5 MARIEKE: Twins.

6 JEFF: Ridiculous.

7 MARIEKE: One of each.

8 JEFF: In any event, I'm not sure I want kids.

9 MARIEKE: You should've thought of that before you shoved me in the bathroom.

10 JEFF: Please, you practically dragged me in.

11 MARIEKE: (*Starting to work at computer*) Dream rape, there must be a website
12 somewhere.

13 JEFF: Look, let's get some perspective on this. Nothing *really* happened, okay.

14 MARIEKE: Right.

15 JEFF: So there's no real reason for us to be angry with each other.

16 MARIEKE: Right.

17 JEFF: So why don't we just go back to work and make like this just never happened,
18 because it didn't.

19 MARIEKE: Exactly, nothing happened.

20 JEFF: Good.

21 (*They both work for awhile*)

22 MARIEKE: And just to prevent any confusion, about dinner to night —

23 JEFF: Obviously that's off.

24 MARIEKE: Obviously. (*Beat*) You'll have to cancel your KFC reservation.

25 JEFF: It was Peter Luger's, actually, if you'd like to know.

1 (*Monday. The office. MARIEKE sits at her computer console. JEFF enters. He stops*
2 *and looks at her, reacts in a way that indicates he's just made a connection, and then sits*
3 *at his computer*)

4 MARIEKE: (*Looks at him with a troubled smile*) Hi.

5 JEFF: Morning.

6 MARIEKE: Morning.

7 JEFF: (*To computer, which is not responding*) Hello, Jeff to hard drive, do you read
8 me?

9 MARIEKE: The network's down.

10 JEFF: Okay. Free Cell, Minesweeper or Hearts?

11 MARIEKE: You can access the program, you just won't have last week's numbers.

12 JEFF: And?

13 MARIEKE: Oh, right, you haven't gotten to the end of the month yet.

14 JEFF: Yeah, I've just been working here the one week.

15 MARIEKE: Well, you have to do these reports and —

16 JEFF: Right, right, I remember Kristof telling me. I can do those now?

17 MARIEKE: You can do last week's.

18 JEFF: Oh. Good. So that's —

19 MARIEKE: (*Going over to him and standing behind him, indicating mouse*) May I?

20 JEFF: Oh, sure. (*Lets go of mouse*)

21 MARIEKE: (*With mouse*) Here, and down here and —

22 JEFF: Great, thanks, uh, Marieke, right?

23 MARIEKE: Yeah, Marieke.

24 JEFF: I get confused with names.

25 MARIEKE: It's from the Jacques Brel song. He was a —

26 JEFF: Yeah, I — I should download that song.

1 MARIEKE: Why?

2 JEFF: Well, because — I don't know.

3 MARIEKE: Not everybody likes that kind of music.

4 JEFF: Guess not. *(Beat)* It's just — I have to tell you, I had this dream last night.

5 MARIEKE: Yeah?

6 JEFF: And you were in it.

7 MARIEKE: Oh.

8 JEFF: It's really kind of odd, I —

9 MARIEKE: What was it about?

10 JEFF: Well, you're gonna laugh, but in it you and I were dreaming the same dreams,
11 night after night.

12 MARIEKE: Hmmm.

13 JEFF: And then we'd talk about them here at work.

14 MARIEKE: Hmmm.

15 *(They look at each in silence)*

16 JEFF: Did you ever have a dream like that?

17 MARIEKE: *(Beat)* Yeah, I did, actually.

18 JEFF: Recently?

19 MARIEKE: Very recently.

20 JEFF: Hmmm.

21 *(They sit in silence, wondering what to do)*

22 MARIEKE: *(Somewhat distressed)* Uh, Jeff, I...*(MARIEKE can't finish the thought)*

23 JEFF: I guess it's silly to take things like that too seriously.

24 MARIEKE: Yeah, I think so. I'm not very big on dreams.

25 JEFF: Me neither.

26 MARIEKE: *(Looking at computer)* Oh, the network's back up.

1 JEFF: Right. Do we reboot?

2 MARIEKE: I'm not sure that's such a good idea.

3 JEFF: Oh.

4 MARIEKE: Why don't we work on it for a while and see what happens?

5 JEFF: Yeah, that's probably a good plan.

6 MARIEKE: *(After working for a while)* Damn, we lost all of last week.

7 JEFF: I hate when that happens. *(Beat)* Oh, well. We'll always have Paris.

8 *(MARIEKE looks at him, a bit surprised and troubled at first, but then they both smile.*

9 *Tiny Tim's recording of My Dreams Are Getting Better All The Time starts to play. They*
10 *both look around wondering where the music is coming from. Eventually MARIEKE just*
11 *slumps in resignation, vainly striking the escape key on her keyboard. JEFF just smiles)*

12

13

— end of play —