

# **FREEZE**

**(one short act about international relations)**

**By**

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*(sitting on a high-banked banquette in a small, empty cafe in the West Village of Manhattan are Ursala, a twenty-five year old, beautiful, blond Swedish girl with tall model-like features and Steven, a thirty-two year old, nice looking New Yorker. They are both having a glass of white wine. It is 9:00 PM on Sunday)*

URSALA

Steven, take me to Freeze.

STEVEN

*Freeze?*

URSALA

Yes....what? Don't you know it?

STEVEN

I know of it.

URSALA

Is it fun?

STEVEN

I've never been there.

URSALA

No?!

STEVEN

Nah, I'm not much of a "club" guy. I'm more of a "wait on line, never get noticed, and *freeze* my ass off outside of the club" guy.

URSALA

Yes?

STEVEN

How is it you've been in this country three days and already figured out the hot place to go?

URSALA

A friend of mine was in New York in July and told me it was amazed.

STEVEN

Amazing. Yeah, it's new and very hip from what I understand. All models and agents and other people won't return my calls.

URSALA

Yes. That's why. Will you take me there?

STEVEN

Not really my kind of scene. I hop a bit, but I don't hip too much.

URSALA

.This is my last night in New York—

STEVEN

It's a medical affliction. Very dangerous. Critical. *Lethal*.

URSALA

*(she hugs on his arm)*

But this is my last night, I'd really like to spend my last night in some place special.

STEVEN

What, this place isn't special? It's the fabulous meat-packing district. That drunk over there, talk about your stars, he once threw up on Elvis's blue suede shoes. That's how they got their name.

URSALA

You know what I mean.

STEVEN

I know what you mean. Why didn't you go there last night with what's his name?

URSALA

I didn't want to go there with him.

STEVEN

What's the matter with him? What is his name, anyway?

URSALA

Robert.

STEVEN

Ah yes. Raaaah-bert.

URSALA

Why do you say it like that? Raaaah-bert.

STEVEN

Why're you with me tonight—and not with Raaaah-bert. The shyster.

URSALA

*(she cuddles in closer)*

I already told you. It's my last night and I want to spend it with you. Besides, he's too old. I don't want to be there with him. What is a shyster?

STEVEN

A thief who practices below Canal Street. Uptown we call them by their native WASP name—scumbags. How old is he?

URSALA

He is 39!

STEVEN

I'm thirty-two! There's not that much difference. Especially not in our intentions.

URSALA

Yes there is!....For me there is. Besides, I like you much better.

STEVEN

Hm mmm, yes, I'm sure. But he could take you to Freeze in the style you've quickly grown accustomed to here. I'm just a poor, tortured—

URSALA

*(she pushes herself away)*

I could be with him tonight! You want me to call him and be with him?!

STEVEN

No.

URSALA

Are you sure?!

STEVEN

Yes. Quite.

URSALA

Well, you stop wondering and take me to Freeze now?

STEVEN

Let's finish our wine first.

URSALA

Let's go now. I don't want more.

STEVEN

Let *me* finish my wine then.

URSALA

*(long pause as he takes a sip)*

Will you write about me?

STEVEN

I don't know, maybe.

URSALA

What will you write?

STEVEN

Don't know that I will.

URSALA

I think you should. I'm very interesting. You should write about how we met in the front of the clothing store window. How you flirted with me—

STEVEN

I didn't flirt with you.

URSALA

How you *flirted* with me and tried to *impress* me by taking me to your friend's poetry reading and the Empire Building.

STEVEN

Cheap family entertainment.

URSALA

You thought you would impress me and get me into bed.

STEVEN

Merely showing you all the sights of our fair city.

URSALA

Including your apartment.

STEVEN

And the occasional tourist trap.

URSALA

Yes. You should write about that. It would be a good story.

STEVEN

I'll take it under advisement

URSALA

*(she looks at him flirtatiously)*

Yes, you do that.

STEVEN

Can I kiss you?

URSALA

I told you, we should be just friends.

STEVEN

Friendship is so boring.

URSALA

I don't want to start something that can't be finished.

STEVEN

Apparently you've been talking to my old girlfriends.

URSALA

I'm leaving tomorrow. I can't just go to bed with you.

STEVEN

What was the reason behind that again?

URSALA

Because I can't! I'm no Swedish stairtype.

STEVEN

Stereotype. Yes, what a shame.—*I'm kidding!* I'm kidding. I am. You know that....Well mostly anyway. Partially. Somewhat. A little bit. Let's move on.

URSALA

Ja.

STEVEN

*Ja festornd.*

URSALA

*Ja forshtor.*

STEVEN

How do you say it?

URSALA

*Yog. I. For-shtor. Understand. Yog forshtor.*

STEVEN

*Yog forshtor. Yog forshtor.*

URSALA

Yes. Can we go to Freeze now?

STEVEN

*(reluctant, slowly)*

Yes, I give. We can go to Freeze now.

URSALA

Really?!

STEVEN

Yes. Let's just get the check.

*(she kisses him on the check)*

Sure. *Now!* Wrong time, wrong body part.

*(to offstage)*

Excuse me.

*(he makes the check sign then nods in that direction)*

Let me finish this.

*(he picks up his drink)*

URSALA

Don't drink too much. You want to keep your wits around you.

STEVEN

My wits *about* me. And why would I want to do that?

URSALA

So you treat me rightly this evening.

STEVEN

Oh yes, that's why?

*(downing the rest of his drink)*

Nothing to worry about there. My left gets so tired of not participating.

*(she looks at him nervous. He smiles in response)*

Relax, I'm kidding. Otherwise you'll sick the absent shyster Raaah-bert on me.

*(the WAITER comes in with the leather bound check holder and lays it on the table. It sits there and neither move for it. There is a long awkward moment pause as he stares at her)*

The big shot lawyer. Where are you tonight, Bobby boy?

URSALA

What?

STEVEN

Nothing. I'll tell you what. Since we're just *friends*, and I *am* a struggling writer, why don't you buy this round and I'll get the rest of the evening.

URSALA

I'm sorry?

STEVEN

You pay for this....and I'll cover the rest of the evening at Freeze. Whatever we spend.

URSALA

You want me to pay this. And you'll pay for the rest of the night.

STEVEN

That's correct.

*(a long pause as she stares at him, then at the check. Without a word, she begins to fiddle in her purse. She takes out a credit card, puts it inside the check holder and waves to the WAITER who comes and takes it away)*

STEVEN

About twenty?

URSALA

What is that?

STEVEN

The bill. It's about twenty dollars?

URSALA

It is eighteen-fifty.

STEVEN

That's about twenty.

*(there is a long silence as STEVEN stares at URSALA and URSALA stares down at the table where the check was. This continues for a minute until the WAITER returns)*

WAITER

Excuse me, I'm sorry, but this card isn't—going through. By chance, do you have another?

URSALA

Yes, of course.

*(she reaches into her purse, grabs another card, hands it to him)*

WAITER

Thank you. It'll be just a moment.

*(he leaves. The silence resumes between these two. Again STEVEN is staring at URSALA and URSALA is looking down, now obviously uncomfortable. After a moment, she laughs, quietly to herself and shakes her head)*

STEVEN

That one's not going to work either, is it?

URSALA

No.

STEVEN

You know it's not going to work? Then why did you give it to him?

URSALA

I thought the other one had some money on it still, but I guess it does not.

STEVEN

But this one definitely doesn't? Then why did you do that?!

*(to offstage, waving to the WAITER)*

Excuse me....Uh, yeah

*(he waves the WAITER over. The WAITER returns)*

WAITER

I'm sorry, this one doesn't seem to be—

STEVEN

Yes. We know.

*(he reaches into his wallet, takes out a twenty and two ones, gives it to him)*

STEVEN

Here. Keep it.

WAITER

Thank you. Have a good night.

STEVEN

You, too.

*(pause)*

Why'd you give it to him if you knew it wasn't gonna to work?

URSALA

I thought the first one had some—

STEVEN

I'm not talking about that one! I'm talking about this last one. You knew it wasn't going to work!

*(there is a long silence as STEVEN stares at URSALA)*

How much money do you have?

URSALA

Six dollars.

STEVEN

That's all.—You're staying at the 92nd Street Y?—You can't get there from here in a cab for six dollars. You know that, don't you?

*(A long silence begins. He shakes his head then stares at URSALA while she stares at her feet. After a moment she raises her head proudly, inhales firmly and looks STEVEN directly in the eyes. They stare at each other for a moment, eye to eye, until STEVEN turns his head away. He doesn't look back as URSALA stares at him, bearing down as he was doing before. Eventually, she turns her gaze away. Her movement starts him)*

STEVEN

You know....we're a pretty stupid country. All of Europe thinks so. It isn't just the French. They're just a little more blatant about saying it to our faces. But everyone there thinks so. The whole continent figures it's just dumb luck we got where we are. One big, huge mistake. And someday our luck will run out and things in the world can get back to normal.

*(a long pause as he sarcastically nods in agreement)*

There *are* a lot of stupid people here. Especially, the men. But I'm not one of them.—And no one is that beautiful.

*(long pause as he looks away)*

Maybe I do have something to write about.

URSALA

Steven, I want to thank you. I had a nice time with you the other day.

STEVEN

Good. I'm glad. Now—shall we go to Freeze?

URSALA

*(she gets her purse ready to go)*

No. I'm going home.

STEVEN

You're going home. I thought you wanted to go to Freeze? Listen....I'm sorry, I didn't mean it. We'll forget the whole thing and—

URSALA

I am going home!

STEVEN

But it's your last night, let's not end it this way. I fucked up. I'm sorry. We can go to Freeze, and I'll pay and we'll have—

URSALA

No!

STEVEN

How're you gonna to get home? You don't have any money.

URSALA

*(she stands with great presence)*

I'll walk or I'll take the subway.

STEVEN

It's a little late for that. I'll give you the money.

URSALA

No!—I will manage.

STEVEN

Why don't we just go to Freeze? I was only—

URSALA

No. You were not....Thank you. It was a pleasure to meeting you.

STEVEN

Have a nice trip back to Sweden.

URSALA

Yes. I will. Good-bye.

*(she leaves quickly and firmly)*

STEVEN

Good-bye.

*(he sits there watching her go)*

*Yog forshtor.*

*(after a moment, he nods and waves offstage)*

Excuse me. Excuse me!—Can I get another?

Fade to Black