

# **TATIANA AND THE BABOON**

The Plight of Women Dating in Manhattan in The Twenty-First Century

**A Ten Minute Play**

By  
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*(on a hotel bed with a dingy bottom sheet, no top sheet and no blanket lie Tatiana and a Baboon monkey clearly in a state of post-coital exhaustion. After a long moment of exaggerated in-and-exhalation, she reaches for a cigarette and the lighter off of the night table nearby, lights it and takes a deep suck of smoke, exhaling only after it hurts)*

TATIANA

*(holding out the lit butt to BABOON)*

You want some?

BABOON

Banana?

TATIANA

No. Not a banana.

BABOON

Banana.

TATIANA

Over there on the counter. There's a bunch.

*(she takes another drag as he makes an exaggerated stretch for it, but not moving from against the pillows)*

BABOON

Banana.

TATIANA

I ain't moving.

BABOON

Banana!

TATIANA

Nope.

BABOON

Banana!

TATIANA

I'M NOT MOVING!

*(long pause, he stops straining disappointed and she draws again hard on the cigarette)*

TATIANA

You want some?

BABOON

Banana.

TATIANA

They're over there! You can see them there under the Cosmo! Next to the ice bucket.

BABOON

*(with child-like whining)*

Ba-nan-a?

TATIANA

What the fuck do I look like, Cheetah? Cheetah come. Cheetah fetch. You got the wrong Sheena here pal.

BABOON

Baboon.

TATIANA

I don't care what you are, I only know what I'm not. And I'm not getting up now.

*(pause as she drags heartily again and he settles)*

BABOON

Banana.

TATIANA

God man, what is with you? Don't you sprechen zie Deutsche? Don't you no habla Englese?

BABOON

*(as an explanation)*

Baboon!

TATIANA

That's no excuse! No excuse! I've been with a lot worse then you.

BABOON

Baboon?

TATIANA

That's the kind of thinking that keeps you off Letterman.

*(she drags again finishing the cigarette which she puts out in the ashtray. As she continues, BABOON begins the feral grunting, scratching and clawing, common with his breed)*

TATIANA

Look at this. Look what I've come to. In the old days, I'd've snapped my fingers and people'd've come in here running and you'd be taken away. And I don't mean removed from the room, I mean gone forever you know. Never be heard from again. Shot! Beheaded!

BABOON

Baboon?

TATIANA

Yeah well that's makes no difference. It wouldn't've made any difference. Shit.

*(she grabs the cigarette pack and raps it twice hard against her palm)*

TATIANA

How far I've fallen. Man in the old days, mmph, I'd've had a horse or a bull or something. Something big, something that *lasts*.

BABOON

Baboon!

TATIANA

Long and hard, firm to the touch. Ten or fifteen if I'm talking an inch.

BABOON

Sex.

TATIANA

You're god damned right about that.

BABOON

*(dismissive)*

Banana.

TATIANA

To each his own, brother.

*(he rises to all fours and begins sniffing in the direction of the bananas, eventually crawling towards them)*

TATIANA

Lowered down on me slowly like I like. Just like I deserved. Like a queen, ruling.

BABOON

Banana.

TATIANA

We had this thing. You wouldn't understand it, there's not much you do.

*(he sniffs towards the bananas)*

I had this contraption built, with pulleys and levers. *Gears*. This hangman structure with a platform. And it lowered. And it lowered further. *Mmph*. Took twenty men to work it! Now look where I am? Hunh, where? An ape. A goddamn ape!

BABOON

Baboon!

TATIANA

Whatever....In the old days, heads man, I'm telling you heads turned. Heads, crowns. Kingdoms! When I walked into a room, palaces, I mean palaces and cathedrals. Goddamned cathedrals!

BABOON

Bananas!

*(he has reached the bananas and begins peeling them, eating with relish. As he eats, he makes grunting noises)*

TATIANA

And they would look at me, all of them. Caesar and Antony, Napoleon and Hitler. One more powerful than the next. One more thrilling, more exhilarating! Alexander. *Ahhh* Alexander. Greek my ass! It was *I* who rid you of those little boys.

BABOON

*(mouth full)*

Bananas.

TATIANA

And the artists, mmmn the artists. "*Hear me o' muse.*" Mozart and Baudelaire, Dante and Picasso, you name them.

BABOON

Baboon?

TATIANA

No! No, men! All men! Many men!

*(BABOON flaps his lips for his apparent disdain for the appellation, then keeps on eating voraciously)*

TATIANA

And they would see me and I had them. In an instant, in that first moment, I knew I had them. For whatever I wanted, whatever I desired. Jewels and gold, kingdoms, dynasties. Heaven brought down here around me. I had the *best* of them at my beck and call. I was a woman, I was *the* woman....I was all women.

*(TATIANA grows lachrymose)*

And now....

*(BABOON notices the silence, stops eating and turns back to look at TATIANA as she tears)*

BABOON

Sex?

*(TATIANA's crying grows louder)*

BABOON

Banana?

*(TATIANA becomes hysterical)*

BABOON

Baboon?

TATIANA

Why?! Why oh why?! You were great once! You were, you were! You were something to behold back then. Annihilating and destroying, raping and pillaging. *God*, it was beautiful! *You* were beautiful! And maybe not always a lot of conversation, maybe not, but some! There was always some!



*(after finishing the bananas, he scratches himself all over,  
rubbing his back on the carpet)*

TATIANA

And we'd lie about the castle or the palace or the bunker, living for each other, feeding each other grapes, nourishing our lions and loins.

BABOON

Bananas?

TATIANA

And we'd hold each other. And we'd spoon. And we'd love. We'd *be* in love.

BABOON

Sex?

TATIANA

*(she look around the room disdainfully)*

And now, now!—Now all I've got is a stupid ape.

BABOON

*Baboon!*

TATIANA

This isn't what I wanted. It isn't. Surely this wasn't the idea.—I just wanted you to be more docile. To listen more and not interrupt so much. To let me drive once in a while.

*(he belches loudly)*

And attentive. I wanted more attention. Anniversaries remembered, birthdays cherished. Flowers without asking for them.

*(he grunts derisively)*

And sex after forty! Is that too much to ask?!

BABOON

Sex?

TATIANA

Yes, fine, sex! A little more sex!

*(he rises, brushes himself off, then in preparation begins stretching calisthenically)*

TATIANA

But not just sex. Fidelity, animal-like fidelity. Loyalty. Faithfulness. Mating for life, for all eternity. That you can count on once you've found. That you can ease and settle into a life with.

BABOON

*(snorting sarcastically)*

Baboon.

TATIANA

No, that's it. That's it, I remember now. I remember.

*(she slowly becomes sleepy)*

I was dreaming. I was dreaming about how wonderful it would be. How wonderful it would be if I could teach him to understand me. If I could get him to recognize and appreciate my needs.

BABOON

Sex.

TATIANA

*(and sleepier....)*

If he wanted what I wanted. The matter, the substance of my life.

BABOON

Banana.

*(he does some leg kicks as she becomes sleepier)*

TATIANA

If he would just listen quietly, and be my servant. This servile beast, this helpless, hopeless—

BABOON

Baboon.

TATIANA

*(barely awake)*

Thing who needed me.—What a dream. What a wonderful, wonderful...

*(as TATIANA nods off completely, he pauses still. A moment later she wakes with a start, her head and posture bolt upright. In the same instant as she does, BABOON begins to speak rapidly to her, but without looking at her and without waiting for any response)*

BABOON

And I'm watching the fucking football game and Kordell Stewart just blew it. He just fucking blew it. I mean who the fuck's he throwing to. There's nobody there! Nobody *near* there. But he lets go and I don't know who the fuck you know. You want some pizza? I want some pizza. We'll get some pizza. You'll have some, you'll like it. We'll eat it and then we'll go again. We'll go one more time man cause you're hot. You're fucking hot! Damn! You got off right? Right? Right. I heard you moan that one time and I knew, you know. I knew. I said, "Yeah, all right. Right there baby." Heh-heh, yeah, I knew I had you there. Shit yeah, fucking machine. I'm a fucking machine. Like that movie you know. Mean machine, mean machine, mean machine! Heh-heh, yeah. Woah! Maybe anchovies. On the pizza, anchovies and pineapple. You'll like it, trust me. I know what you like. I know I gotch ya. You'll see. Good stuff. Good stuff, huh?

*(he turns to TATIANA for the first time in this speech. She is staring at him sadly)*

BABOON

Wha? What is it? What'd ya want?

TATIANA

A banana lover.

BABOON

A wha?

TATIANA

*(pause)*

Nothing....Come.

*(she reaches out her arms to him)*

BABOON

Heh-heh, yeah. All right.

*(as he moves to the bed, he grunts like an ape)*

**Fade to Black**