

Act 1

Prison's PA system notice: Night count has ended. Cellblock on full lockdown.

Scene 1: The End

[Prison cell. Bunk bed, toilet, sink. Fan screeching. The two inmates have finished reading Don Quixote for the umpteenth time]

Theo The End. (he lights a cigarette)

Luca What a book... The book, right? The book...

Theo Shush...

Luca How long does it take to write something like that?

Theo Quiet! When one reaches the end of a book, one needs to be quiet. Have some respect for these final words. Let them echo through...

Luca It's funny how... [notices the sharp looks from inmate1, echoes his words] funny how... funny how... I'm... letting it echo...

Theo Let's have it then, you've already shattered the silence.

Luca It's just funny how... I couldn't remember the ending. We've read it, how many times now? The ending never seem to be recollected.

Theo No one remembers the Bible's ending either. "In the beginning God created...", everyone remembers that, but the ending – no.

Luca Right! How does the Bible end in the end?

Theo Don't remember.

Luca What sold more copies, the Bible or Don Quixote?

Theo It varies, there are times when people believe in God and there are times when people believe in themselves. (points to the book)

Luca Another pearl of wisdom...

Theo Stick with me, you might just learn something.

Luca “Stick with me...” as if I got a choice. Tomorrow we start over, right?

Theo Eh?

Luca Tomorrow we start again?

Theo No, tomorrow it must be returned.

Luca What do you mean “returned”?

Theo That’s how the library works. It’s called “borrowing”.

Luca But you’re the librarian!

Theo All the more reason. If I don’t obey the rules, who will? The book is lent for three days only.

Luca Since when?

Theo New regulations.

Luca Can’t we get an extension?

Theo We can – for three more days.

Luca So -?

Theo We’ve already used that option, we’ve had it for six days straight.

Luca Hang on, hang on... if I, say, return the book, then –immediately - take it back out again?

Theo Theoretically yes, the law abides that it must be returned to the shelf, and if nobody takes it, you may take it out again.

Luca What do you mean “nobody takes it”? Who in here’s gonna need it? The Romanian from cell six that murdered his mother and stuffed her parts in the freezer? Suddenly has an urge for a touch of the old Don Quixote, will he?

Theo I just laid out the principle-

Luca I don’t care about the principle, I care about the book.

Theo I’ve explained it lock, stock and barrel, so enough, shut up, got it?

Luca I got it. Every time we finish the read you get all bothered. These past five years together I know more about you than you do about you. Tomorrow is a new day – I’ll cook us a nice cake in the kitchen...and we can start reading all over again. We are going to read tomorrow, right? Just give us a “yes”, not even as an answer to anything, just say “yes”. Say “yes”, say “yes”, say “yes”...

Theo Yes.

Luca There you go, thank you very much. That’s it, I’m turning in, Not a word out of me, no Sirree!. (a pause) The best part about reading before bedtime is it gets into your dreams - ever notice that? Suddenly your dreams become...

Theo Remind me again, when do you get out?

Luca Three years.

Theo Too long.

Luca “Too long”... You won’t survive a day without me.

Theo I won’t survive without you?

Luca Not even an hour, one minute without me – you’re dead. Who can tolerate you except for me?

Theo I can't even stand the sight of you, you moron.

Luca Say, Cervantes really wrote this when he was doing time?

Theo He really did, but fortunately for him he didn't do time with you, with your endless blathering, blithering, blabbering, would have reduced his writings to a steaming pile of horse shit. Shut up before I break your tailbone.

[Luca tries not to snicker with all his might]

Theo What's funny?

Luca Tailbone...it gets me every time that we even have such a thing... a bone for the tail... imagine waking up tomorrow morning with a tail...

[Theo infected with the laughter]

Theo What an idiot... Sleep. Bless the maker of sleep. He who sleeps is not hungry, not thirsty, not lonely, not lustful, not afraid. And no matter who sleeps – sinner or saint, knight, or squire.

[Luca falls asleep. A small electric fan begins to whirl by itself. Theo approaches the fan and turns it off. Returns to bed. Fan mysteriously begins to turn again, screeching]

Theo Stop it... stop it... stop it!