

THE HAPPY LISTENERS

Zazie devised a script to accord with our adventure. What was her starting point? I remembered the origins. I was in this dingy room. The paint was peeling from the walls. The toilets were overflowing.

"I want to go home."

"Relax, Dorothy."

No one was going to relax here. Those were the conditions of our existence. The music was too faint to make out any of the tunes.

What was the right balance of hot and cold?

"It is springtime."

When did this really start?

"Turn the music up louder. It can drown out the reality of this shithole."

The music was already blaring. It hurt our ears.

"I need someone to come through for me."

"Listen!"

What was I listening for?

This was a different kind of liberation.

"We live like this all the time. You can't just change the soundtrack and expect things to change."

"What am I supposed to expect?"

"I gave everything to reach this point. I don't want to lose it that quickly."

I was going to sleep on the couch.

"What has brought us all together?"

I looked around.

"We are going to take you to a special place."

"I came here looking for a miracle."

Was the miracle worker on the verge of enlightenment, or was it just more bewilderment? Did the words have enough to reveal what I craved?

"This is not a prayer."

Was everything damned in this place? I needed some quick revelation. I was looking at all these signs. And they spoke for nothing. Could an artist bring all these points together? Where would they meet?

"You need to clean out the litter box."

"You are a visitor here. Don't complain."

"I can hardly breathe. Don't you know the difference?"

"I can reach the sky. What else matters?"

"Better music."

"This is great music. Don't you know the difference?"

"I really do, and it does nothing for me."

"The world is not going to change simply because you see things differently."

"What is the role of art?"

"A way to exaggerate a shitty existence. Go to work, and shut up."

"I am visiting this place. I do not know if I want to stay."

"You can't stay here indefinitely. I am doing my cousin a favor."

"I appreciate the favor."

"Quit complaining about the music and the litter box."

"Give me something to make me feel better!"

"You are given a gift, and you do not even recognize what you have."

We lived and died by this. It was our soundtrack to another state of being. What had it become? I did not want to complain. But I did not want to surrender to this moment.

"You never owned any of this."

"I get that."

"I was waiting for something. What would it be? It would be a different uniform. A different mode of existence."

"You are displacing yourself from reality."

"So be it. That will be your only way to survive."

"This will continue until perpetuity."

"Until we all get tired of caring about it."

"What does it mean to know and accept that soundtrack?"

"You recognize what is going on in your environment. You hear the crickets chirping. You smell a rose. You observe the clouds. You lose yourself in the night sky."

"You are leaving nothing to the imagination."

"I have a plan for this night."

"I am going to starve myself."

"I am going to ignore my past."

"I want another past."

"That is possible."

"Change the soundtrack."

"None of that makes a difference."

"You need more of a comparison."

"Who else is keeping track?"

"You feel restless."

"You run out of yourself."

"You want it all for yourself."

"Accept it."

"You can do what you want in the privacy of your home."

"You invite others."

"This is a gallery."

"They are playing music. What is this?"

"Everything is indistinct. You have to make a lot of effort to figure it out. It will all become evident. We will accept that evidence."

"I am here all the time."

"I need to take this risk."

"This is for you."

"They all say that."

"When are you going to get off the couch?"

"I need more money."

“You could work!”

“I have my art.”

“What is your art?”

“It is me.”

“I didn’t think that you were like that.”

“I am someone, how can give the world everything that is desired.”

“And what is not desired. You are dying as I look at you.”

“I am dying to be with you.”

“I have a guy.”

“I didn’t mean that.”

“Your art is never going to take you anywhere.”

“It has brought me here.”

“My cousin has brought you here.”

“This is only for a little while.”

“Did you miss the bus home?”

“I do not want to go back.”

“I see everything that I have ever wanted.”

“Someone appreciates you.”

I was not looking to be understood. I knew that was going get me into trouble. I needed a quick solution. I was straining this connection. In a few days, I would be out. I wanted to head to somewhere exciting. Maybe New York. I could live in Paris.

I needed to produce something. I needed to justify my promise. What was getting in the way of my creativity? I felt as if my vision was not clearly defined. I wanted to be one with being. I did not want to be apart. The artist tried to create this apartness. It only accentuated the solitude. I didn’t feel abandoned. I cherished the moment for what it was.

Where could I better understand my nature? The world offered my certainty for what it was. Did I need to peel away this outer layer? I did want to be like the people around me. They were battling to survive. What did they have to show for it?

Each person only added another layer to this edifice. They were some who were truly blessed by this prosperity. I want to be among them. I wanted to be part of this celebration. It was more vanity.

I was scratching the litterbox. Was this all that remained? I had my ticket out of here. I had wanted to leave before. I was hesitating.

“Wait a little longer, and I will give you a ride.”

What is that supposed to mean?

“Everything will make sense in a while.”

“It was going to make complete sense right now.”

“You have to know something to make sense of this.”

“I do not know much.”

“You are here for the show.”

“We know you already.”

“That is nowhere near enough.”

“This is a religion.”

“It is a terrible one.”

"We develop our faith from what is available to us."

"I am losing my faith."

"Take what you can."

I was merging with this crew. I didn't have any clear reference points. I felt as if only hours remained.

"Listen to this. This music is made by people who live in sewage drains."

He laughed as he told me this. I tried to find a beat.

"Everything needs to be consistent. If you cannot know, you cannot know."

"It is time to get a move on."

"Give me one more night."

"We are leaving in the morning."

"I am good at this."

"I need to get out of myself."

"On to the next town."

I slept soundly. I did not want to be awakened in the morning. I tried to recall that some that had been playing. I could not recall it completely.

"You need to wake up."

"I am trying."

"You don't apply any effort to anything."

"There is a room where all of this makes sense."

"I made a few dollars."

"You will get a few dollars more."

"Something needs to open up."

"There is all this cash floating around."

"Do a count!"

"I am."

"Someone has to intervene."

"What is your name? There are no angels here."

I decided to take the train home. My friend wanted to stay here longer. And his cousin was no longer that friendly. I couldn't make this a permanent connection. I wasn't going to get a job here. I had no reason to stay.

The train ride was lonely. It was a sense of defeat on my part. I didn't want to stay in the city. What were the appeals? I had come here for a visit. I had been welcomed. But I never felt comfortable. What had made me so vulnerable? This was only supposed to be temporary, but I felt that there was some reason that I was supposed to remain.

I didn't want to become like the cousin. She was a victim of her emotions. She would never be any different. Her life would play out this way until she had no more life to give. She would never realize what she had lost. This had been the bargain. That only added to her belief in the moment. That meager faith played along with her bitterness. It would never be any different. I never wanted to be like that. How could it be any different? Those were the conditions of her life.

Why did I expect it to be any different? What did she have which would improve her chances. I thought about these meager attractions. I imagined spending the rest of my life in front of a television. Would it even matter what was on?

She seemed to be on verge of an artistic awareness. But this was little that could sustain that desire. The screen would flicker. The sound would be intermittent. Would she ever discover a clean escape?

She wasn't going to be privilege to new dialogue. Why should there be? Everyone needed to maintain the role. That would satisfy her for the present. Who would achieve lasting knowledge?

She needed to make sure that the electricity would remain on. A storm could threaten the experience. The city had enough challenges with the weather. She accepted those terms. An occasional outage could be absorbed. It wasn't as if she could maintain this illusion constantly. It only accompanied her reality.

"What are you talking about?"

"I am no longer sleeping on your couch. I really have nothing more to answer for."

"You need to answer for your misdeeds."

"I am not willing to accept that burden."

"Can you even hear what I am saying to you?"

"Turn down the television."

None of this was going to make it any easier for her.

"What were the terms of this deal?"

"I give my heart."

"Did that guy ever show up?"

For the time being, she had enough passion to keep all of this acceptable. It like paying her rent. She did it all reluctantly. But it helped continue the illusion. She was not awaiting a grand revelation. If she woke up every day that was all that mattered. She did not want her world to change too quickly. Otherwise, she would not have the means to deal with it.

"How can you even call that passion?"

"You go back to that same regret."

"And what is the result."

"I am not her to offer advice."

I wasn't even there. Where was I supposed to be? I couldn't remain here. I could try to hide in the shadows.

"You are going to have to pay for the shadows.

"Give me the light for free."

"The light is [powered by electricity. That is a utility. That is an extra charge."

No wonder, I was not going to last there.

"Listen to this!"

"What does that matter?"

"I do not want music to make me more industrious. I am not a fucking machine."

"You get frustrated. How else can you get rid of those feelings?"

"My challenges are even greater?"

"Do you feel threatened?"

"Who is threatening you?"

"I only need you to pay the utilities."

"Don't call my mother."

"You were ducking me. You were acting like a child."

“Where did you find my mother’s number?”

“It is your home number.”

I was going to have to receive forgiveness.

“You can be a prick.”

“I need the electricity to play my music.”

“What do you want me to do about it?”

“I want you to realize the commitment.”

“We all realize things that we can do nothing about.”

“There are metaphysical concerns.”

“What does that mean?”

“No matter how much effort that you exercise, there is no way to get rid of the metaphysical challenge.”

“That makes no sense to me.”

“It is not meant to make sense.”

“Then you realize that you are hurting.”

“No medicine is going to work.”

“That is what my cousin said.”

“She said that music is the best therapy.”

“She wanted something more.”

“What happened to Mr. Particular?”

“He lost himself in common sense.”

“Does any of this matter?”

“Take whatever you can find.”

“I need to take care of this quickly.”

“You can’t sleep in the car.”

“I am clean.”

“Where is that headed?”

“That one song.”

“Keep me warm.”

“Somoene forgot to pay the gas bill.”

“I thought that there was some agreement that they would never cut us off.”

“You need to accept the conditions.”

“That is all conditional.”

“That is how it is described.”

“You need to clean this up for yourself.”

“I know what is on the counter.”

“The check.”

“You promised that you were going to explain the context of the music. The appeal of anarchy. The need for another social model.”

“This is how it actually occurred.”

“I want this kind of acceptance.”

“The shit reminded me of a mother’s love.”

“That never works that way.”

“Honestly, how does it work,”

“Money talks.”
 “How long? How loudly?”
 “*You can’t have music without electricity.*”
 “*They are screaming in the alleyways.*”
 “*Is that a song?*”
 “*It will be.*”
 “*Everyone wants a way out.*”
 “*Someone got hurt.*”
 “*He said the wrong thing in the alleyway.*”
 “*It is all about the right song.*”
 “*Identities.*”
 “*Rivalries.*”
 “*Royal houses.*”
 “*You don’t have a pot to piss in.*”
 “*You are always pissed.*”
 “*You can see that in differe ways.*”
 “*This is a simple trust.*”
 “*I cannot fulfill that promise right away.*”
 “*You need to learn how to make a promise.*”
 “*My life is my collateral.*”
 “*That sounds positive, but they want to deposit.*”
 “*What qualifies as a deposit?*”
 “*The pound of flesh.*”
 “*A reserve currency.*”
 “*You understand where the history took us.*”
 “*I think that human history will result in a different differetn perspective.*”
 “*We need to quit the madness.*”
 “*This is becoming very difficult.*”
 “*Who is the favorite son?*”
 “*The one who did not raid the ice box.*”
 “*The one who kept the ice box on.*”
 “*The music is playing loudly.*”
 “*I want to be friendly.*”
 “*This is not a friendly agreement. You work. You pay the utilities.*”
 “*I am still existing in the dark.*”
 “*I cannot explain all of this for you.*”
 “*We are competing in different ways.*”
 “*It will all make sense to me.*”
 “*You cannot stop the march of history.*”
 “*This is not a march. History has come to a standstill.*”
 “*Get the damn silver spoon out of your mouth.*”
 “*We want better results from our anger.*”
 “*Mute the protest.*”
 “*You are going to need to get angry. Very angry.*”

"We are already understanding deep facts about energy distribution."
"Is that music?"
"It was."
"What tune are you singing?"
"Recorded music changes the equation. You need more."
"You have the power to alter the conditions."
"And how do you do that?"
"You throw a wrench in the machine."
"I do this all the time"
"Do you actually work for the power company?"
"It is all fun for me."
"What is going on in the apartment?"
"We had to evict them."
"I want a hearing. I have privacy rights. I have a right to my music."
"Your music was very loud."
"That is what it said on the label. Play loud!"
"Is there a physical form?"
"The sound waves."
"The particle waves."
"What makes it happen?"
"How do you want to save that?"
"Do not shove the microphone in my face."
"How does that happen?"
"This is hurting me just as badly as it is hurting you."
"I do not like such equivalences."
"We can do biology."
"Sound waves."
"You failed to play your electricity bill."
"I found this cheat that could keep the power on indefinitely."
"I feel deprived."
"We are hearing different things."
"There is an evident delay."
"That is how they make money."
"How long is the float?"
"Long enough to develop bad ideas."
"It is still difficult existing."
"That is part of the human condition."
"That is part of the conditioned human."
"Then you start asking questions."
"Give me a dollar."
"Give me ten dollars."
"Is that your share?"
"I want a fair deal."
"I saw it. I know what I see. I can recognize proportion."

"There is something else going on the throne."
"A deposition."
"Off with your head."
"That has a different meaning in other contexts."
"I am getting myself back."
"I did some good things."
"You have no idea."
"I am ready to move on."
"Load up the truck."
"No one actually lived anywhere. That was how the music worked."
"There is different exchange rate."
"What do you get? Who pays?"
"I GIVE MY TIME. I GIVE MY LIFE!"
"You are going to have to give a little more life. Maybe, add a little more life.":
"Where is that coming from?"
"These are holy words."
"I want someone to explain how I got this way."
"Meaning of life shit."
"Mean life shit."
"You cannot blame your circumstances."
"Is there a setting."
"We need a set dresser."
"There are a million people like this."
"I could taste this."
"It tasted terribly."
"I have one more option."
"Where do you want me to sleep?"
"We have a parking place. You can drive the car in there?"
"It is winter, and it gets ice cold."
"Here are two sleeping bags."
"You will need more than that?"
"What do I need?"
"YOU NEED A CAUSE."
"I had a cause."
"Explain historic causality."
"You really want something. You would give your body and soul.":
"Why did you not look before you leaped?"
"I had a personal interest."
"We always do."
"That is so wonderful."
"This is part of historic inevitability."
"That is everything that I ever wanted."
"A STATEMENT APPROPRIATE FOR A CONCRETE NOW."
"The concrete now and the immaterial future."

"We have only started to offer an understanding of historic inevitability."
"That is a musical connection."
"I am very good at this."
"Do not electrocute yourself."
"I have no intention of hurting myself."
"There is enough hurt in my experience."
"I need to explain this."
"Be an adult."
"I would prefer to exist in the darkness."
"You have all these kids squatting in this place."
"They are trying to escape the shit in their lives."
"It could be so much worse."
"Who are you doing this for"
"There is no electricity. You can crash here for free until the cops find out about it."
"This is a theme of the music."
"You are getting a little too close with nothing to show."
"I am saving money."
"Look me in the eyes."
"Are you celebrating this lifestyle?"
"I do not want to go back to the shitiness in my life."
"You need to explain this for me."
"There are a million ways to explain this."
"You need a great performance."
"I want to be part of that."
"I had a bad day."
"This explodes out of my head."
"There is a method."
"Turn off the power."
"Or turn it up."
"How does everyting get turned up?"
"Is there a better and a worse?"
"You needed to make a decision."
"I knew it would end up like that."
"I am testing you."
"Of course, you are."
"Are you going to pay."
"I see that there is an art in the moment."
"You need the light on."
"This is part of the interrogation."
"What do they hope to find?"
"I was depending on you."you were.
"Everyone depends on somethng."
"I depend on human emotion."
"Less certain than electricity."

"There are human storms."
 "Is that who you are?"
 "That is all that I can ever be."
 "I knew who you were."
 "I have been announced by history."
 "I have a special calling."
 "Like the Annunciation."
 "More concrete."
 "A social calling."
 "Spell it out."
 "The music was supposed to say it."
 "Zazie, what does this mean?"
 "It makes me happy. It is fun."
 "We surrender to our desires."
 "I could keep track. I could apply accounting principles."
 "We are always back at the same place."
 "Did he get what he wanted?"
 "You tell me."
 "I feel that I have a level of expertise."
 "About social revolution?"
 "About power grids."
 "You cannot create a political understanding with impressionistic descriptions of the social circumstances. It is important to understand the source of political oppression."
 "Big words."
 "What do you want me to talk about?"
 "This is all the result of labor unrest."
 "The people wanted the power to be on all the time."
 "They wanted better wages."
 "You take what you get, and you work harder."
 "Where does this ever work?"
 "The conditions get our worse."
 "You spent all your money on glitz and glamor."
 "I want to forget."
 "You are forgetting how to change things."
 "We find new places."
 "We destroy our living situation."
 "We cannot afford to pay for these places."
 "I am not looking for cleverness."
 "We are way beyond social planning."
 "This is not a date."
 "This is a vacation."
 "It does not feel like that."
 "I am taking my sick days."
 "This is a sick life."

"The place is not healthy."
"You are squatting in this abandoned warehouse. These rats are your friends."
"I do not really care."
"You are protecting something that cannot be protected."
"That is hardly a fair explanation."
"He will get more courageous."
"What will he ask for?"
"To live without constraints."
"How many people are going to be able to save?"
"I have two jobs."
"I know where this is going."
"You are finished."
"Close the door."
"I know how that works."
"Each day is exactly like the last."
"There are weekends."
"I work weekends."
"What about nighttime?"
"I sleep."
"We do not complain. We do not have time."
"You could have more time."
"It never works that way."
"That is your analysis of history."
"I believe in faith."
"I believe in redemption."
"There is something important that I left out."
"You did too. This resume is full of inaccuracies."
"I worked, and I hated it. What more do you want to know?"
"None of this worked out."
"I made some notes."
"There needs to be a little more clarity."
"This needs to be dirtier."
"It needs to be dirty if you want to clean it."
"Is your lease up?"
"It is all about the power bill."
"What are you protecting?"
"No one will ask."
"I have to be at work on Monday."
"Fix the stuff that is going on in the apartment."
"I want to play music. "
"There is a lot of noise coming from the other apartment."
"Something weird is going on in there."
"She doesn't have a care in the world."
"Who lives there?"

"She just moved in. She plays music all night long."

"Do you like it?"

"It is too loud!"

It didn't matter what she was playing. It was a nuisance.

"That is the beginning for a personal transformation."

"The music is supposed to change what is happening in our immediate vicinity. It alters what we want and what we don't want."

"It is a fucking bother."

"There is only one way to create more enthusiasm.

"I am waiting for the equal but opposite reaction."

"You are giving more than you have to give."

"Do not leave my side."

"Where is this headed?"

"I am going to get a place next door."

"Ask a good question."

"How can I get you to shut up."

"Tell me!"

"How long are you in this place for?"

"I have got complaints."

"I need to do more."

"That is all that I want."

"I wish that I was a simpler person."

"There is a more complex motivation."

"Something is going to make everyone too aggressive."

"That is the music."

"I have had a supernatural visitation."

"The art explains that!"

"It could explain all those situations."

"You are good at counting."

"You need so many miracles to qualify."

"Fudge them."

"They have to be distinct events."

"You need more than that."

"Do you have a desire to save the world?"

"I am only into performance."

"You need more than that!"

"Honesty could help."

"That is not the basis for verification."

"Cure the wound."

"Healing can be slow. We need a quick verification."

"I do not believe that any of this is possible."

"What is the root?"

"A bone marrow transplant."

"That may not solve the problem."

“You have to believe the medical evidence.”

“You told me that this was about the music.”

“The noise next door.”

“Do the operation!”

“What do you control?”

“The biochem!”