

MICHAEL FILIMOWICZ

The Constanta Suite: Three Films for Puppets

Film # 1: The Dumbwaiter Progeny

[Night at a shipping yard. An old warehouse, and an echoey, crying sound.]

VOICE #1 *“The Father”*

OF ALL THE STUPID THINGS an old man can learn to admit to, that had to take the cake. A babe in a box, plopped down in a bedding of old invoices and contracts. Smearred in ink, as though born out of a printing press! Who could have left it there? Were they in a rush? Did they have some errand to attend to, and intend merely to do what was expedient at the time? And on their hypothetical errand, did some misfortune befall them, such that they could never retrieve the startling infant? Well, who hasn't heard of a baby in a basket, whether a basket floating down the river or maybe left on the doorstep, just after the bell has been rung? These are familiar, plausible baskets. But a dumbwaiter? 3 a.m. at the close of inventory day, with only a young accountant on duty, and not a soul stirring anywhere? Now, that was strange. Who could think to entrust me with this baby? Did I strike some poor soul as possessing an especially high degree of potential paternity? Or did I have about my person some sort of uncanny electrical charge, and thus cause a magnetic deviation in the migratory course of a lone stork? Bah! Or, as my father would say, Fah!

I took it straightaway to the headquarters of the local constabulary, what today is somewhat vulgarly referred to as a “police station.” No one had reported an absent infant. At first, I was the object of quite an amount of suspicion, and inquiries were made into my personal affairs. Was there, in my recent past, a love affair gone awry? Was there some lady in the picture, who was now conspicuously out of the picture, the only clue of whom being the child? Sadly, there was no such romance to be found, no feminine presence in my life, unless one were to consider the Spanish cleaning ladies

who sometimes shared my shift at the customs office. I then became an object for ridicule amongst the *gendarmes*, exemplary of unmanly qualities, rather than the focal point for an investigation. And truth be told, I'd've preferred the latter.

There was a choice to be made. The infant could become a ward of the state, likely consigned to an orphanage in some obscure precinct, or I could stake claim on it, adopt it, in short, give it my name, bring it home, make a crib, "all that jazz," as they say in the United States. Out of some slight, Christian impulse, I took on fatherly responsibilities *vis-à-vis* the boy.

It was not a particularly attractive newborn, as far as they go. Aside from the ink blotches, it had a curiously compacted face, as though the head had been squeezed out of a rock, not to mention an unwieldy Roman nose, even at that age. In fact, many hours went by before I dared confirm it was indeed a boy. I had a premonition that that fact would mean trouble in the future. Though I could never have guessed the extent of the trouble that would come.

For my courage and good deed my employers rewarded me with a slight increase in my wages, to help care for the boy, whom I called Adam. It was the first name I thought of, and seemed to fit that cartilaginous face.

It took several weeks to scrub that ink off the boy. Soap in those days wasn't what it is today. Though there was one spot I could never remove, a small blotch on his chest about the shape and size of a small coin. Scrub as I might, it would not rub off. I even secured the aid of one of the Spanish ladies from work, but to no avail. It was a permanent stain.

Incidentally, I would find that the boy would prove to be quite the aphrodisiac, what the Negroes of North America call a "mojo." That Spanish maid was the first of many women who would become smitten with the "Orphan Saver," as I was named in the newspapers. I was the only bachelor in town who was taking care of an abandoned child, and that had quite an effect on the ladies! Had I found another such child and yet another, even a flock of abandoned babes, I would without hesitation have taken them all in—my charges would undoubtedly have increased the swoon factor. Women appeared out of nowhere, willing to aid me with the various child chores—the self-soiling, the gurgling, the bouncing and rubbing, nursing and sitting. You name it—for every task that comes with a newborn, there was some stray feminine volunteer who showed up at the door to lend her services. It was strange indeed. It was as if all the women in town were in on a little secret, as if they were somehow all party to this boy's existence, and had a stake in his rearing. But how could that be?

[*A short sequence follows, ancient Troy, and the Trojan Horse.*]

Never look a gift horse in the mouth, as they say. Though what does that mean, really? First, what is a gift horse? Is it some odd reference to the Trojan Horse? But then, in that case, one would certainly want to look the gift horse in the mouth, because then perhaps the Greek soldiers might have been discovered, and the ambush thwarted. It was certainly in the Greeks' best interest that the gift horse go uninspected! Or maybe it just means that if one is fortunate enough to be given a horse, one shouldn't quibble over dental features. Oh well. Excuse the digression. Suffice it to say that I put up not an iota of resistance to the women who got me through the early years of that monster's life. I accepted all that they offered and then some. It should be said that they did have limits to their altruism. It wasn't long before the favour of nursing the babe was steadfastly refused, for he had a tendency to chew at the women, discontented as he was for a mere drink. The toothless boy was already craving his pork chops! He was showing signs of what he was to become even in his first months on this earth. It was many years before I emerged from the haze of women's sympathy and awoke to the truth of his nature. I want to say that by then it was too late. But it was probably always too late for him.

VOICE #2 "*The Priest*"

NEVER WOULD HAVE BELIEVED that a soul could be beyond redemption. That boy almost made a Calvinist out of me. I have no doubt that he had a destiny awaiting him in this world, and no interference from a third party would do him any good. From my first efforts to teach him of Our Lord, it was as if some demon had already taken root, and would not let go of its host. Why, one night, after returning from the district chancellor's wake, I witnessed a vast congregation of hobos and street urchins lying about the steps of St. Albans. I tried to shoo them away, begged them to return the next morning at proper service hours. But they had not gathered for grace. Rather, Adam, who by that time had taken to calling himself Bartholomew—which would have been his confirmation name, had he finished his catechism classes—had broken into the sacristy, and doled out all the wine to these pitiful derelicts. Every last gallon had been passed about, and this on the eve of St. Rupert's, patron saint of sinners afflicted with foot sores! I chased after that twin-named thief, but I got tripped up in my robe and he got away from me. Later I found that he had spent the remainder of that night spreading nails across the cobblestones, in order to menace the next day's traffic.

There was no discipline in that boy's life, for his father had no control over him. On several occasions I attempted to communicate my frustrations to that clerk. He was a lust-mad fellow, always in the clutches of some young lady, whose sympathies he exploited for his hedonistic ends. You see, he used the boy as a prop for his lechery. He was always playing ignorant of parenting ability. He made like a poor man who had taken on the challenge of raising the abandoned baby out of pity, and had gotten in over his head. Somehow his sad story always culminated in the bedroom. That user of women is completely ignorant of how many bastards he himself has fathered through these copulations. From my post in the confessional, I have heard the same plot unfold many a time.

[A Woman's Whispering Voice, emanating from the dark]

"Father, I cannot tell him of the child. He is already beset beyond his means, taking care of poor Adam, with whom God has entrusted him. If he knew of my condition, he would no doubt feel obligated to perform his duty such as would absolutely wreck him as a man, as he is already at his wit's end with the orphling."

And so it was, year after year with that man, the "poor bachelor," "savior of an abandoned babe," actually a manipulator of women's instincts and a seducer of innocents, whose folly was to sire himself dozens of illegitimates of whose existence he was blissfully unaware. And to think that I am oath-bound to say nothing that could put a stop to this sad, absurd tale!

Of Adam-Bartholomew, the clerk would insist that "boys will be boys," and that he believed that the best way to compensate for the absence of a mother figure in his life was to give the boy as much freedom as he desired, as disciplining him in any way would give the boy a "negative father imago," which he said he had learned about from a Venetian pathologist.

I eventually gave up on proselytizing to the miscreant.

[Adam-Bartholomew is hiding under a pew ringing the alter bells, which he's snatched, every time the priest attempts to speak at the podium. The ringing echoes throughout the cathedral, so that the source of the sound cannot be located by the angered altar boys. He takes a drink from the holy water, in which everyone has dipped their hands, and casually knocks over a row of votive candles, setting fire to the church.]

VOICE #3 "Bartholomew"

[A man is sitting on the ramparts of an old fort, writing a letter. A severed hand pops out of his jacket pocket, and he carefully tucks it back in. As he speaks aloud, writing, various jump cuts reveal a series of images that might exist in the mind of a serial killer. Dark alleyways, stalking in the bushes. Contorted facial expressions. The moon. Etc.]

DEAR EDITOR. LATELY YOUR newspaper has been giving me many chuckles, and this latest edition has offered me so many chuckles that I damn near couldn't down my milk for ten minutes this morning while dining *al fresco* in the Stoozle Platz. Many people passed by on their way to their various employments, and there I was, chuckling away, the crumbs of my cream-frosted pear turnover spraying from the corners of my mouth (you'll have to guess which bakery, for I do not want to give away too many useful hints). Very good.

The *gendarmes* have been absolute comic geniuses, and for knowledge of their pranks I heartily thank you and your diligent reporters. First there was the arrest of the now infamous pickler, whose pickling days are over, thanks to having his name dragged through the mud in, of course, your newspaper. I for one can attest to his pickles, and they were fine indeed. A better pickle cannot be found in these parts, nay, in the whole damn kingdom. Or are we living in a republic now? Whichever is more fashionable, I suppose.

As a result, no less than fourteen generations of pickling knowledge has most probably arrived at a dead end, as the pickling house has been boarded up, the proprietors run out of town by the suspicious stares, and consequent lack of customers. I wish them well in their exile, may they find some haven in which to ply their trade.

Then there was the visiting pole vaulter, who has since, has it not been reported?, been discharged from the Olympic games after being hauled out onto the public stage and humiliated as though he were some damn pickler! He, of course, was innocent, and now ask yourself, what's a discredited pole vaulter worth without his shtick? What will become of him? He has no degree, no handicraft, no royal lineage to fall back on. That poor boy, that poor, jumping boy (excuse the sudden burst of crumbs at this point—I can't refrain from laughing), that freckled jumping Hans from Aufle duLachen, or whatever charming hamlet such jumping boys spring from—HAHA!

Then the bank manager, the tourist officer, and just last week, the butcher's idiot—such a parade of characters, I must say, better than most novels written these days! One by one, your paper chronicled how the police went about choosing perfectly innocent citizens, defaming them,

casting their vapid clouds of suspicion, their tawdry innuendoes, and how your reporters heaped hyperbole upon hyperbole upon them! “The worst criminal in history!” “The Villainous Monster Apprehended At Last!” “The worst villainous criminal in a long time captured, finally!” And then, the puny retractions, the embarrassing apologies, “*Gendarmes Mised Again.*” “On the Wrong Trail—Again!” And my absolute favorite headline of all time, “Pickler Innocent, Devastated.”

Well, I thought I should take the time to send you a little letter, and personally thank you for the comedy. And like a good serial, I anxiously await your next installment. Who will be hauled out and humiliated in my place, next time? A Cornish spinster? A Gypsy bookbinder? I can't wait.

You may be asking yourself, what does this writer mean, “in my place?” Is he, heaven forbid!

Yes, yes, heaven forbid, the devil take all, etc. etc. all that holy whine. Yes, it is I, the strangler, the stabber, the cause of fear in many a breast at night, the beast on the loose, who strikes at random, seemingly without pattern or motive. It is I. It is I. It is I who am writing the Chief Editor of my favorite daily. (And, moreover, lest you take this as a jest, might I add that if this Letter To The Editor isn't printed in this Sunday's edition, then I will take one more life than I otherwise would have, in retaliation. Do you want that on your conscience?)

For your part, you are wanting to know my height, my age, my weight, the colour of my hair and my irises, my race, my full Christian name, my address, and my present whereabouts. You are wanting to know all these things so that some poor sap isn't slandered in your next edition, accused of being me.

So here's what I am offering. Each time someone appears in your journal, whom the *gendarmerie* purport to be *moi*, I will send you, Dear Editor, a simple letter, which shall say, “Nope. Not I.” It will be written in the same script as this letter that I am writing now. Then, upon receipt of this note, you shall instruct your reporters to cast doubt upon the competency of the police, call into question their every move, and all but insist that yet another mistake has been made. They shall ridicule all detectives, lawyers and judges who have anything to do with the manhunt that is underway. This will add to my enjoyment of the comedy. I should add that I want to enjoy this comedy very much.

You may be asking yourself, “How do I know this is the ‘real deal,’ as they say in New York? How can I be sure this is the real killer, ‘The Night Knife-Man,’ as I am now called?” As proof of the veracity of my claims, I include with this letter the right hand of my latest victim. You should know, however, that I would not have killed this fellow had I not needed to prove

myself to a skeptical editor. I hope that he is the last victim to be sacrificed in order to establish my credentials with the Chief Editor of my favourite newspaper.

Publish this letter, in this Sunday's edition, or you shall be responsible for yet another useless murder.

Yours Very Truly, A-B

Film #2: Three Wives From Geeja

The Three Wives—Mena, Usha, Sylvatri [*to be read in three voices*]

IT WAS AS IT HAD BEEN for a long time. The virgin wives must set off with their virgin husbands and seek the blessing of a saint, if the consummation is to bear auspicious offspring. Offspring, all agreed, should be as auspicious as possible, what with all the potential misfortunes—the low life expectancy, the epidemic of demonic possessions, the breakdown of incest taboos, kidnappings in the night, and all the other pitfalls of child rearing. Those were dire days, and dire days needed saints. Unfortunately, the nearest saint was inconveniently located several days' journey from our village.

We set off, three girls, whose worst fear was forgetting some important detail about our new husbands. The major mile posts of his lineage, the pertinent relative who made the match, or even, Allah forbid, his name! Three girls, learning strange odors, acclimating to a new, general sense of fear, and glad to be out of our parents' houses for so long a stretch.

What saved us was the earthquake. Though, at the time, it was purely a disaster, with no silver lining in sight. The brave husbands had all proved themselves of heroic stock, shielding us from the avalanche with their bodies, bodies which would remain mysteries to us forever. Ata and Gothan died instantly, their limbs and faces crushed to pulp. Muomon would linger for days, moaning verses from his delirium. As his belly slowly filled with blood, he apparently was encountering fairies and waterfalls. I suppose that was a mercy.

Where were we? To this day I cannot identify that cursed mountain range in which those events unfolded. We had been kept in the dark, blindfolded in the back of the buggie. We did our best to assuage Muomon's suffering. We bade those who aided us, two vagabond merchants, to let us bring him with us, though his end was so clearly in sight.

No one saw what I did. I don't know where the thought came from. I had never before had any such ideas, and the night hid my blushing. I secretly removed my undergarments and tucked Muomon in my private linens. As he lay in that hole, I somehow thought it soothed him, that he

knew he would rest in peace forever with some essence of his once future wife clinging to him. It was a hot night, and the absence of my underwear brought welcome coolness to my sleep. It also brought other feelings, new sensations.

It was several nights later when one of our saviours felt emboldened to force himself on one of us. I awoke to a vague mumbling, some hushed-up argument muffled under thick blankets. When I first opened my eyes, I thought I saw the great, dark shadow of a camel with two heads, writhing on the ground in spasms. Mena woke at the same time, and we saw that the impossibly large, wriggling shape was Silvatri in some kind of trouble with a huge, dark mass. We rushed to her, and pulled the thing off her. It was one of the merchants. His eyes were rolled up into the back of his head, and he was grinning like a squirrel whose cheeks are pulled apart by a cat's claws. Some kind of grin like that.

It was stupid of us to run off into the desert. No food, no water, no money, no knowledge of the terrain. We would suffer much in that wilderness.

I did not recognize their language. I removed the stupid, heavy gold my mother had secured to my body the morning of the wedding—my dowry. My wrists, ankles and neck were stinging from their attachment. Sand had lodged under them, heated and chafed my skin. I don't know what came over me. I walked over to the farmer, and bartered one cheap ring for a cart full of his harvest. For two days we gorged ourselves on that buffet—watermelons, string beans, casks of yogurt, various fermented liquids and dried meats—it was shameful. At the end of that feast we lay heaped on each other in the cart, bloated, gaseous, taking long, careful breaths, enjoying shade and the absence of want. That was the beginning of all that would follow.

I snuck up on him in the fields. It was not difficult to seduce him. As he lay unrobed in a patch of hoed earth, Mena and Usha, disguised as bandits, assaulted him, and snatched Silvatri's ring from his discarded purse. The old man ran off into the stalks, leaving Silvatri to fend for herself with the "bandits." We had learned to survive. We had hit upon the means of our living, in a land where three husbandless women would otherwise be consigned to mendicancy or whoredom. Our strength was in our numbers.

What started out as a means of subsistence gradually blossomed into a profitable enterprise. It was I who first had the stroke of genius to recover more from the dupe than the pawned jewelry. All manner of objects managed to come into our possession, and these we sold in marketplaces and waysides, slowly accumulating our nest egg. Our dream was to one day use these funds to launch a legitimate enterprise. A dairy farm, perhaps,

or a manufacturing concern, say, saddles or stirrups. But our life was not easy—we were doomed to always be nomads, driven into distant lands where legend of our scam had not infiltrated.

[The rest of the voice-over consists of the three women speaking their polylinguistic pigeon-gibberish. They become three rich spinsters, maybe living in a castle with many servants, perhaps even founding a man-harem. Or they become wealthy mafia gypsies in some remote Baltic state, who hold a blackmailed king in their collective palm.]

Film #3: The Perpetual Apprentice

APPLES AND ORANGES. That's what he said. Mr. Popa always explains it good to me. No no no, the strap is for the stock, not Mrs. Gunower's poodle. It's like apples and oranges. We do not offer poodle to the public, he said. Got to remember. Just think of apples and oranges.

There it is again. The squishy stuff. Have to clean up the squishy stuff. Get it off the floor, find the broom. No, the shovel. The broom and the shovel are different. Apples and oranges, Franz. Chop chop. On your toes. Spic the span. I will be able to eat off the floor.

Mr. Popa helps people. He lets people eat. Without him, where would food end up on the table? He is a great person, very busy. People grow big and strong because of him. I help Mr. Popa be a great man. Without me, he could not work good. Who would empty the buckets while he lays on the pigs?

I like it nowadays. I am safe here. No people come after me anymore. No more bad priests, no hungriness, none of sleeping in the snow. Mr. Popa keeps me good. I have a room all to myself I share with the mouses.

I like the animals. It is hard to believe that somethings smelling so bad can taste so good. Mr. Popa says that killing them makes them taste better. He told me this when he found me eating an outlet. No, no, Franz, it's not an outlet, it's called a piglet. Apples and oranges. It was kicking me very hard in the face. Mr. Popa said that if it was dead, I could eat it without it kicking me so bad, and it would taste very good.

He was right. He is always right. I am always doing things wrong, but he tries to teach me the right way, and I work hard to be more like him. We are apples and oranges, but one day maybe I will be not so much a bad apple. I am learning from him very well. Now I can do things without him always showing me how. I like it when I do something good, and he doesn't have to show me. He is very happy if I do this. He is very mad when I'm

bad and do something the wrong way. He has lots of tools for when he gets mad. The angry tools. They are awful. Franz is in the dog house then.

Once there was a fire here. Mr. Popa woke me up and I never seen him so yelling. These black walls here—the fire made them black like that. He showed me how water makes fire turn to smoke. I showed him how fire makes skin change. I was very brave running through the fire to save the pigs, he said. He was very happy. I even saved the chickens before the fire came to the coop. I was sick for a long time after the fire night. It hurt to walk and pee.

Mr. Popa then moddized the room. The candles and gas lamps went. The apron men came and opened the walls and ceilings, put long snaky things everywhere and now there are buttons on the walls which open and close the white bobes. Mr. Popa says that someday I will know how to change the white bobes, just like he does.

Mr. Popa and I have a big secret. He made me promise not to tell anyone. He said if I told anyone I would get in big trouble and so would he. He even hit me on the head very hard, trying to make me forget the secret, but I still remembered. The lump on my head will remind me of the secret, Mr. Popa said.

He has left a knife out. Put it in the right place, Franz. Chop chop on the double. It must fit in with all the other knives just so. Mmmm. So shiny. It makes my face look like scrambled eggs. Oops. Now he will be very angry that I've spilled the knives. I've never had to put so many away before at once. Spots! The soap water leaves spots.

Spots are bad. Franz has run out of soap. That little girl stole some soap. Shush, Franz, remember the secret!

The mouses tickle me at night. They give me the shivers when they eat at face. At night I dream that the mouses are talking to me. They are very funny when they talk. They stand up on two legs and pretend to be like Mr. Popa.

Mr. Popa feeds me the meat food he does not sell to the people. It is very nice of him. I like to swat at the flies. It is a fun game. Mr. Popa showed me how to use the spatula to squash the flies. It is hard to get them, they're so fast. Mr. Popa smiles very big when he sees me put the dead flies up my nose. Sometimes he laughs so hard! I like to make him laugh.

I have to be careful with the dingaling. In the old times I was not careful with it, and all troubles would happen. Mr. Popa told me that the dingaling could only be used in my room. In my room, I could do whatever I want with the dingaling, but everywhere else, I must not use the dingaling. People used to look very scared when I would use the dingaling. They would bring the bad priests, or kick me, or run away scared. Mr. Popa said

it was apples and oranges, the dingaling in my room and the dingaling in the street. In the street the dingaling was an apple, but in my room, it was an orange. So now I am careful to leave the dingaling alone except in my room. That's why I took the little girl to my room. It was the place for the dingaling. She said she wanted to see a dingaling. She had never seen what a dingaling could do.

It gets very cold outside sometimes. In the morning I have to get up when the rooster screams and grab the scraper and the shovel. Mr. Popa showed me how ice was a nuisance to his business shop and how to take care of ice. It is fun to see my breath in the cold. Sometimes I stare at it too long and Mr. Popa yells at me. He once taped my mouth and nose shut so that I wouldn't stare at my breath in the cold. It was a good trick, but it made me fall down and sleep. So Mr. Popa said that I could play with my breath steam after I took care of the ice for him. He said that people would fall down and get hurt if I wasn't a good apprentice. If I do like he tells me to I will someday be like him, he says. Until then, we're apples and oranges.

The customers are very nice. They like Mr. Popa's shop. They give Mr. Poppa money and Mr. Popa gives them meat. In the evening Mr. Popa sits at a table and counts the money. I am not allowed to be near the money. Once a coin fell off the table and rolled across the room. I picked it up. Mr. Popa grabbed my ear and yelled so it rang. I am only an apprentice and so I cannot touch the money or the white bobes.

What's that?

[Franz is in the alley. Above, a large flapping tarp, tossed in the wind, is caught on the butcher shop's chimney.]

Get the ladder, Franz. Franz! Don't be afraid of kites, go up the ladder. Stop crying, Franz. Be brave. Don't look down, said Mr. Popa. I don't like kites. They make me dizzy when I look down. Why does the ladder shake so much? What is that thing doing to the chimney?

Pigeons are nice. They talk nice. Goo coo coogrrrrrrrooo.

[Franz falls asleep with the pigeons on the roof, wrapped up in the tarp. He dreams of a little girl in his room. The mice are talking in the background.]

Franz!

Oh no! Where am I! The roof! Mr. Popa! Mr. Popa! Franz is on the roof!

Franz! Come down! Stop playing. The coal has to be put into the furnace!

Kites, Mr. Popa. I'm scared of the kites!

Heights, Franz. "H," "Hhhhhheh," not "Kkkkkkh," where's the ladder, Franz? Did you let someone take the ladder?

[Franz is flailing in the tarp, panicked, unable to get the tarp off him. He runs about the roof looking for the ladder, checking over all the walls. The tarp obscures his vision and trips him up, and he falls over the side into darkness. He awakes, and it is quiet. He has landed in a fruit cart, onto a pile of apples and oranges. The vendor is knocked out on the ground.]

Little girl! Little girl! Come here! Franz will show you something.

[A little girl runs up, steals an apple and an orange, and runs off down the street.]

My poor Franz. Didn't I show you how to use the ladder? Didn't I explain the use of the scale to you, and the array of slicers, how to cure ham with salt, how to make it tender, and the arrangement that is so pleasing to customers? Twenty-three keys for the whole place, Franz, and I trusted you with twenty-two of them! Think of what that means, Franz, how far you've come, what a smart idiot you are! Now you're a smart lame idiot.

[Franz is talking to himself, rubbing the fruit, sniffing them, licking them]

I protected you, Franz. That night when the police came, I told them you had been scrubbing the walls. I saved you, Franz. Why do you think I did that? Can you digest that, Franz? Can you guess at what I risked by that? And now look what you've done! You've jumped off the roof and cracked your skull and shin bones at the least. You are no good for me anymore. You've betrayed me. You've turned me into a schmuck!

[Mr. Popa pulls the tarp off. Franz is lying on the sidewalk on the other side of the block from the butcher shop. His face is lying in a puddle of his drool. He sits up. People are staring, having gathered around him. His legs are splayed at unnatural angles. Mr. Popa comes along, with a tin mug in his hand. He hands the mug to Franz, and speaks very kindly to him, like a father and a teacher.]

Hold the cup like this, Franz. That's it. Good child. Now, rock it back and forth for me, back and forth, easy does it. Nice people will put money in the cup for you. Money, Franz! I am finally letting you handle the money! You're a big man like me, now. No more apples and oranges.

We're the same, now, sweet boy. You have your own business, just like Mr. Popa. Back and forth, Franz, nice and slow. Coins will make a nice rattling sound, like this. Here's a coin, Franz. Rock the coin in the cup. For everyone to hear. There you go. Good, Franz. I'm very proud of you.

[Mr. Popa walks away. Franz sits on the curb serenely, shaking his cup.]

