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Barbi Marković

Born in Belgrade in 1980, studied German literature and has lived in Vienna since 2006. In 2009, Marković caused a sensation with the Thomas Bernhard remix novel "Ausgehen". In 2016, she published the novel "Superheldinnen", for which she received the Alpha Literature Prize, the Adelbert von Chamisso Prize and the Priessnitz Prize in 2019. In 2017, Barbi Marković read at the Bachmann Prize. 2023 Barbi Marković received the Berlin Art Prize for Literature. In 2024, Barbi Marković received the Leipzig Book Fair Prize for "Minihorror" and the Carl Amery Literature Prize for her literary work. Most recently published by Residenz Verlag: "Die verschissene Zeit" (2021) and "Minihorror" (2023).

Barbi Marković
MINIHORROR

Residenz Verlag
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192 Pages



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In Minihorror, ordinary nightmares come true – humorous, surreally imaginative and always aware of the fragility of our existence.

In Minihorror, Barbi Marković tells the story of Mini and Miki and their everyday adventures in the city. Mini and Miki aren't from around here, but they do their best to fit in and do everything right. Despite – or rather because – of this, they are constantly pursued by dangers and monsters, by catastrophes and troubles. This is a book about the nightmares of the middle class, great and small, about the horror of the perfect family breakfast, about workplace bullying and holiday disasters, about the yawning, ever-present emptiness of everyday life. In Minihorror, Barbi Marković has created a perfidious, compassionate monument to the agents of fear in our society – to read it is to feel at once caught-out and understood.

PRESS REVIEWS SELECTION

Barbi Marković wins the 'Prize of the Leipzig Book Fair 2024' with 'Minihorror' - excerpt from the jury statement:

Fast-paced, serialised and pop-savvy - that's Barbi Marković's new book, which you want to read in one go without interruption, as if in a rush. Because the enjoyment of her witty and seemingly simple sentences, which measure the absurd depths between everyday life and the existential world situation, should never end. Barbi Marković tells an enchantingly funny and bitterly serious story about our present: war crimes at the back, climate change at the front, and the banality of our everyday lives in between. In 'Minihorror', Barbi Marković exposes the uncanniness of every situation, no matter how harmless, the horror of everyday life, the horror of one's own family. In the process, people in late capitalism inevitably become the butt of jokes.

SWR Best List of December 2024: Marković does not formulate a morally sour indictment out of her frustration with the small and large impositions of everyday life, but rather takes Mini's horror to an ironic extreme. And the result: poetic pop..

Christiane Lutz, SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG: "The perceived everyday horror is equal to the real mega-horror, one flows into the other, that is Marković's art, and therein lies the humour of this book."

Fritz Göttler, SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG: "In her novel 'Minihorror', Viennese writer Barbi Marković tells of the everyday life of the young couple Mini and Miki - crass and funny like surrealism, only more disturbing. The horror in this book arises from the ordinariness of the events recounted here, and this horror is terrible and terribly funny."

Clemens Setz, DIE ZEIT: "In her book 'Minihorror', Barbi Marković writes captivating stories about man-eaters, doppelgangers and monsters. (...) She is a master of the electrifyingly new use of familiar genre elements, comparable to the works of George Saunders or Karen Russell. (...) For me, Barbi Marković's books are by far the most moving adventure into the mysteries of cartoonish storytelling undertaken in German. (...) It really has been a long time since I was allowed to read a book in which you can have so much fun experiencing the most gruesome twists and uncanny apparitions sentence by sentence."

Clemens Setz, Der Standard: "Mini and Miki encounter a series of monsters and catastrophes in 'Minihorror'. They encounter all the familiar possibilities of the horror genre for transforming everyday life into various aspects of hell, and what most writers would turn into graceful slapstick at best, Barbi Marković turns into moving, fox-smart poetry, full of tenderness, wisdom and almost anarchic human love."

Jan Wiele, FAZ: "Giving a book of short prose the title 'Minihorror' is a good idea in itself, and organising this prose like a comic whose drastic and grotesque images are only created through language is an even better one. (...) Just how playful, but by no means harmless, the poetry of Barbi Marković, born in Belgrade in 1980, is can also be seen in the 'bonus material', which has the beginnings of a graphic novel. As short as these (miki and miniatures) are, they too occasionally create maximum horror."

Insa Wilka, DEUTSCHLANDFUNK: "The eeriness of everyday life can be so funny if only the right people look at it and describe it. Bora Chung and Barbi Marković, for example. What do the two writers have in common? Their humour and their enormous talent for the bizarre. And then their sense of language, which really brings out their merciless X-ray vision when it comes to social contradictions."

Jörg Schieke, MDR: "The book has something grimacing and over-the-top about it, but that should be taken as a compliment. There is a real spark of original sentences right from the start."

Carsten Otte, NZZ: In Marković's linguistic art, humour and madness merge. (...) Barbi Marković writes little monster stories in which the monstrosity is equally present in all participants. This 'mini-horror' is like Edgar Allan Poe on speed.

Jolinde Hüchtker, TAZ: "Marković has succeeded in writing a hilarious novel that takes language wonderfully seriously. (...) The author writes in clear sentences that pop. Every word is spot on, even the ugly ones."

Judith von Sternburg, FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU: 'Minihorror' is a book about the banal and fundamental insecurity in a confusing, not good world. And about the defencelessness and ignorance of the reasonably enlightened person who wants to do the right and decent thing. It is about sensitivity and the attempt to take things as seriously as they deserve to be taken. It's about being half-conscious of your own ridiculousness."

Cornelia Geissler, SWR2 KULTUR: "There is a great cosmos of horrors of everyday life, of the present, which Barbi Marković captures (...). It's all a bit off the rails, but it's still pretty close to our present day."

Moritz Klein, SR2 KULTUR RADIO: "Loss of control over one's own life would perhaps (...) be the term to describe the horror in all or most of the stories in 'Minihorror'. Its serial variations are played out in a highly entertaining way, with apparently boundless ingenuity. Mini-horror, great fun!"

Bettina Steiner, DIE PRESSE: "If anyone can be said to have their finger on the pulse of the times, it's Barbi Marković. With almost somnambulistic certainty, she publishes a more or less drastic book every few years, in which we find our desires, longings and grievances. (...) Of course you can do that with fears. You tell them, you banish them. You make fun of them. You share them. You make them as big as monsters and as small as fruit flies, you play with them and push them around. You can only learn from Barbi Marković. "

Christina Vettorazzi, DER FALTER: "Minihorror' is actually an impossible book. No one can invent such bizarre stories and then write them in such weird sentences. No one except Barbi Marković."

Sebastian Fasthuber, DER FALTER: 'Minihorror' is Marković's first collection of short stories: These are small, quirky horror stories that reinterpret the scary genre in the direction of black humour. With 'Minihorror', she underpins her reputation as a unique voice in contemporary Austrian literature."

Werner Krause, KLEINE ZEITUNG: "In 'Minihorror', Barbi Marković demonstrates her great love of storytelling. At the same time, she shows how twistable and reversible truths can be when they fall into the hands of first-class authors who have no interest in any kind of linear narrative style. (...) With 'Minihorror', Barbi Marković, this marvellous linguistic artist, finally provides a varied alternative to the sometimes very monothematic literature on offer in recent times."

Judith von Sternburg, FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU: "The new texts by Barbi Marković (...) are a kind of novel in stories, actually the unusual case of a cartoon series without pictures. This is not only due to the names of the couple whose lives are told here. Above all, it is due to the characteristic Marković narrative tone, so direct and fragile, so funny and abysmal that it always makes you laugh and cry. But first and foremost to laugh at. It's crazy entertaining, lurid and true."

Helene Proißl, DER STANDARD: "Barbi Marković has a feel for the right chapter opening sentences and adjective-noun combinations. However she creates anxiety, it works great. Like a mixture of Kafka (...) and fables, but without a generalising rule at the end. (...) The laconic tragedy of the narrative voice, which seems to know a fate inside out: mean. But also enjoyable to read."

SAMPLE TRANSLATION

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Translated by Caroline Waight

Cousin Jennifer

Mini and Miki want to be nice, but nothing comes easy. The world is a terrible place, and everybody dies someday. They go through a lot, the both of them, and that's exactly why we love them.

Mini doesn't like to talk about her family.

'Why are you so secretive about your relatives?' asks Miki on one boring rainy day, as Mini scurries past him with a packet of lentil crisps, returning to the series she's already been watching for six hours.

'Are they war criminals?' asks Miki.

'No, I don't think so,' Mini says.

Mini and Miki laugh uncertainly, because that sort of jokey question springs so easily to the lips, but can lead to unpleasant situations if the answer is yes. Mini is in a bad mood today, so she has to spend the whole thing watching TV series. The rain drips into the mud, but if it wasn't raining, there wouldn't be any mud in the first place: Mini's mood is much the same, and today the floor of her spirits is sludge, a mire in which she finds no purchase and where, eventually, she can't help slipping and falling. Even if she does somehow manage to get up, her mental legs are dirty, wet and cold, everything is generally contaminated, and existence merely toil. But this will pass, and Mini will pick up after her series as before.

The next day ... The weather is fine, and Mini and Miki decide to go to the supermarket. They're missing a few household items. They're in dire need of kitchen roll, as well as oat milk, vegetables, red wine, bread and eggs. They assure each other they will be focused as they shop, they won't spend half their lives in the supermarket, but as soon as they set foot inside they forget all about the kitchen roll. Forgetting kitchen roll is normally no big deal, but in this story it will be needed later on. Miki goes over to the wine rack to study the red wines, while Mini is lured by the colourful junk food in the freezer aisle. She still clings to the dream of an unprecedented, mind-blowing ready meal, something that will really knock her socks off. A glinting pizzaburger that explodes in the mouth would pique her curiosity, at least. Miki's wine rack is mirrored in the glass of the freezer Mini is scanning for her dream products. She watches his reflection, the careful way he reads the labels. The two have very different buying habits. He tries to justify his impulses, rationalise them as thrifty after all, arguing on the grounds of quality. Mini doesn't. Mini is fulfilling wishes she didn't know she had.

In the glass, Mini sees Miki suddenly abandon the wine and walk over to a small person with long hair. From Mini's perspective, all that can be seen of the stranger is long blonde hair

and two thin legs in skinny jeans. The person seems fragile, standing in the corner with her nose in the protein bread.

'Why would anybody stand so close to the shelf,' wonders Mini, 'unless ...'

Mini, realising who it might be, stuffs the pizza back into the freezer and runs over to the wine aisle: 'Watch out, Miki! Don't go any closer!'

To the person who still has her back turned, she says, in an unusually deep voice, 'Jennifer. Odlazi.'

The person quivers slightly, either crying or giggling, but doesn't turn around.

Mini says, 'Nemaš šta da tražiš ovde. Znam da ne živiš u ovom becirku.'

Miki, with his A2 level Serbo-Croat, doesn't understand what's wrong. He's got a wine in his hand. He was trying to divine the taste through the glass while at the same time calculating the cost-benefit ratio when he saw this creature trembling in the corner and went to ask if he could help.

'Mini,' says Miki, 'what are you doing?'

'Miki,' says Mini, 'you need to be careful.'

Mini shoves Jennifer towards the exit, threatening that next time she won't let her off so lightly, she'll call the police. Jennifer seems minimally impressed by the threat.

But Mini only barks another gruff command: 'Odlazi, Jennifer, odlazi!'

Jennifer leaves, and Mini and Miki meet up at the till and pay for the items they had selected before the incident.

On the way back, Miki asks what the hell just happened, why Mini threw that tiny woman out of the supermarket.

Mini says, 'Jennifer is my cousin. I know you won't believe me, but she's dangerous. She already done it to dozens of people ... consumed them.'

'Huh?' says Miki.

'Please, just stay away from her. If you want to live.'

'What's she done?'

'She's a flesh-eating monster, I'm afraid. But people never believe that until it's too late.'

Miki thinks Mini is yet again being too reticent about her family. He assumes the words 'flesh-eating monster' are a metaphor, because we live in a city and in the twenty-first century and in Europe, and the West at that, in Austria, and not elsewhere, such as maybe in the Middle Ages or the Balkans or the back of beyond in the mountains in Romania, where people can add black magic to their list of other problems. Miki is annoyed. He questions his relationship with Mini.

Two streets further down, Jennifer stops and scents the air.

'Miki,' she says very softly.

The next day in Miki's open-plan office ... Someone is standing shyly in the corner by the coffee machine, turned to the wall, hair over her face. Miki doesn't notice the figure until a couple of hours have passed, and a colleague points her out to him. He recognises her immediately, goes over to the coffee machine and asks, 'Why are you here? Is your name Jennifer? Don't you have anywhere else to go?'

At the last question Jennifer whimpers and quakes a little more, and there's still no telling if it's tears or laughter. Miki isn't sure what to do. His colleagues are discussing which emergency number to dial to get rid of the quivering thing, but they can't make up their minds if Jennifer is a matter for the paramedics or the police. She isn't causing a disturbance, she doesn't appear to be ill or interested in trade secrets, she's just standing in the corner. When Miki's shift ends and Jennifer is still skulking by the coffee machine, he takes her home with him. Well, she follows him without asking, actually, and he doesn't stop her, partly because he doesn't know how to get shot of her and partly because she's Mini's cousin. He doesn't want to interfere – Mini's family evidently works differently from his.

But to chase her off would still be disrespectful, he thinks.

Later ... Mini comes home and throws her jacket onto the floor.

'I'm tired,' she says.

The flat smells of the soup Miki has been making out of embarrassment, so he doesn't have to talk to Jennifer. Mini is pleased to have something to eat. She goes into the living room to plug in her phone, dumping her rucksack.

Suddenly ... Mini catches sight of Jennifer and freezes on the spot.

'Miki, you idiot,' she says, peering around warily to check if it might already be too late. She hears the toilet flushing.

'Oh thank God,' she whispers, sucking down the air.

An as-yet-unscathed Miki emerges from the loo and tries to explain himself. 'I couldn't just leave her standing by the coffee machine at the office.'

Mini spits on the floor. 'Fine. Then it's time for you to see everything.'

Picking up the stick they use to prop up the enormous houseplant, she reaches it towards Jennifer's head – from a safe distance – and gingerly lifts the long hair back. The red flesh. And the eyes ... Jennifer's face.

'Jesus, Mini, what is that?' asks poor Miki, who will never be able to forget what's he's just seen, and who had no idea there were such terrible things in the world.

Jennifer is calm and still, as though she hasn't noticed yet her cover has been blown, but it's clear from Mini's body language that things are about to get dicey. From the hips down, Mini's body is already turning the other way, readying itself to escape. What's hidden under Jennifer's hair isn't a face at all, it's an assemblage of dripping flesh, with holes where eyes and nose should be. Two hemispheres of tissue move apart, torn shreds separating in the middle. Jaws with three rows of teeth gape like a shark's. Jennifer snaps at the stick, chewing through the hard wood in a millisecond. Mini leaps back, she says to Miki, 'I warned you. This is what Jennifer always does. She eats families.'

Mini runs to the shelf to get the kitchen roll. She finds none. Then she grabs two loaves of sliced bread which, luckily, they bought at the supermarket that day.

And then ... Mini approaches her dangerous cousin with caution and begins to sing a song.

'Back, back, Jennifer girl. Don't come to us, we have a wife and children here. // (In Jennifer's voice:) The wife I will kill, the children I will keep, forever yours I will be ... // Back, back, Jennifer girl ...'

Jennifer makes noises like a whimper, moving like a happy dog. Seizing an opportunity during the final verse, Mini stuffs her cousin's mouth full of bread so she can't bite and jostles her out of the flat.

'You've got no chance here, Jennifer,' says Mini, bolting the door.

For a few minutes there is quiet scratching, then it stops, and when Mini peeps through the spyhole, there is no one to be seen.

Mini and Miki give each other a high five.

The rest of the evening passes quietly and harmoniously on the sofa. Except, when Miki gets up to go to the toilet ... there's a rustle. Miki recognises the small silhouette in the dark, the yawning mouth. He tries to run away, but he's too slow. Jennifer stands before him. She snaps at his head. He feels her warm teeth on his temples and his brow. Drool and blood run down his ears and neck and down his back. Miki screams.

Just a dream ... Miki wakes up on the sofa.

'See,' he says to himself, 'it was just a dream, a nightmare, a way to process what happened so that life can go on afterwards, without monsters.'

Mini is sitting next to him on the sofa, watching TV. Without looking at him, she says, 'Waiting in the toilet is a classic Jennifer move.'

Miki nods and leans back, but he can't relax.

Small Axe

The night before ... Mini is patiently applying make-up, carrying on a conversation with herself.

All she'd said to Cousin Kylie was, 'Kylie, those gold trousers are beautiful.'

And instead of answering like a normal person, instead of simply saying thank you, Kylie had acted like some stuck-up rich relative, and said to Mini, 'Mini, if you like the trousers, then I'll give them to you.'

'I'll give them to you,' Mini repeats in disgust, and spits into the sink.

Then she remembers something else she didn't like.

The host humiliated her at the last reading. Without so much as a glance at her, he said, 'You can't seriously call yourself Mini. The name on your birth certificate is Minerva!'

Mini had replied that random men don't get to pick what her name is, but it was no good, he introduced her as Minerva.

SHHH! Mini hisses at her reflection.

Mini is putting on make-up because she'll soon be going to a party. Checking the time, she notices a missed call from Kylie. When she calls back, Kylie doesn't answer. A few seconds later, she glances down at her phone and sees Kylie has called again. Mini tries once more, and Kylie doesn't pick up, but then she calls back straightaway and Mini sees and takes it.

'Finally,' says Mini, with a laugh. 'My phone's on silent.'

'I know,' says Kylie. 'Everybody keeps their phone on silent.'

Then Mini tells her cousin what's on her mind, one thing after another ...

'They've been treating me funny again,' says Mini.

'Funny how?' says Kylie.

'I'm naïve and I forget that people can't tolerate difference here. That interview was particularly bad.'

'What was the question?'

'It was for the radio. Right after she said hello, the journalist went, Mini, you look different. Do you feel like an Austrian?'

'Oof,' says Kylie.

'I thanked them for letting me even speak on the radio when I looked so incredibly different.'

'You shouldn't take it so seriously.'

'They spelled my name wrong on the poster again,' says Mini.

'Terrible, terrible.'

Kylie only wanted to ask who was coming to the party ...

Mini reels off a few names: 'Dada, Jopa, Miki ...'

A few minutes later ... The phone call is at an end, and Mini has almost finished with her make-up. Miki still has to water the plants and finish descaling the coffee machine. This story is about a party, and the party isn't about anything in particular, but as always, it's about everything. It is about racism and friendship and money.

At the location of the party, preparations have been going on for hours ... A few people have gathered where it's about to begin. They've already been shopping. At the off-licence they bought bottles of spirits with animals on the label. They've bought tonic this time as well, because it's somebody's birthday. The beer they didn't buy at the expensive shop, they got it cheap at the supermarket. The room is currently being cleaned and the sound set up for the party. A person arranging the glasses says, 'Mini's coming. Maybe she and her friends will do their own karaoke songs again, oh my God!'

'That's the worst! I don't understand their language, but I'll sing along anyway,' says someone else.

Meanwhile ... Several small groups are pre-gaming at home beforehand, so they can jump straight into the fun the minute they arrive at the party. Mini and Miki have done everything they need to do, and now they're sitting virtuously on their seats in the tram, looking forward to a good time. They get there far too early. The first hour is torture. Only a handful of people, loitering woodenly. Mini tries to listen in on a conversation in which somebody is explaining to somebody else what's the easiest way to measure the rooms so that they can subsequently recreate the evening in VRChat.

'That would be so cool,' says Mini.

The bell rings more and more often ... Somebody has a birthday, and everybody who comes in says congratulations and laughs and shrieks. There are champagne toasts, sparklers that sputter and glance off the skin. Some groups get started on the high-proof booze, trying to kick the vibe up a notch.

'There are reasons why Mini isn't allowed to drink schnapps,' says Miki, taking away her shot glass.

Mini and Miki's friends are annoyed – they don't know exactly what those reasons might be, and they can't think of any, so some of them say, 'Come on, Miki, don't be so macho, let Mini do what Mini wants.'

Miki's getting a bit frantic now, because he's genuinely afraid of the consequences, and he turns to Mini. She's supposed to set things straight, tell them she mustn't drink schnapps, but she doesn't. Far from it.

She says, 'I'll have one.'

Miki backs off, hoping that this time, Mini doesn't go nuts. He hates parties. So many things always go wrong. People talk non-stop, they say whatever pops into their heads, and in the process there are hundreds of inadvertent insults given, which the insultees don't always register immediately and yet take home with them, forever. Nobody understands anything, acoustically or otherwise: it's chaos, just half-sentences shouted out of context.

'Are you going anywhere after this?'

'I've got work tomorrow, I'm afraid.'

'Any beer left in the fridge?'

'There's no beer left.'

'Should we order beer?'

'Has anybody ordered beer?'

'I'm ordering.'

'You ordered already?'

'Shall we go to mine later?'

'It's always most fun in the kitchen.'

'It's always most fun in the bathroom.'

'Who's got a phone we can use to DJ?'

'Stefanie Werger!'

'Somebody's locked themselves into the toilet.'

'Great party flat!'

'Who lives here?'

'They're in the smoking room.'

'Have you seen *Stranger Things*?'

'Put Kate Bush on!'

'Can you open the champagne?'

'Who did you come here with?'

'With friends.'

'Do you have any rolling paper?'

'Why are you sitting all alone?'

'Can you watch my stuff for a minute?'

'Go to the toilet, there's something in there for you.'

'These aren't my kind of people.'
'You look familiar.'
'Do we know each other?'
'Where do I know you from?'
'Do you work in online marketing?'
'Do you have an Instagram? Add me.'
'They've run out of toilet paper.'
'No problem.'
'I'll add you.'
'This music is annoying.'
'Call him.'
'Have you got any?'
'Is there WiFi here?'
'Let's take a photo and send it to Lucas!'
'Should I call a taxi? What's this address?'
'Can I invite a friend?'
'Who's choosing these songs?'
'I'm a director.'
'Should we order pizza?'
'If you can't handle me when I'm in a mood, you don't deserve me when I'm on coke.'
'Cool song!'
'What are you doing for New Year's Eve?'
'You're driving down to the coast?'
'This music is shit.'
'Have you seen the video with the goat?'

Miki is stressed, because he doesn't want to screw up. He doesn't want to drink too much or too little and he doesn't want to tell the same person three times that humour is underrated (not again). He wants to speak to strangers, but he doesn't want to get lumbered with any of these people so they'll be breathing down his neck all night. He doesn't want to talk to anybody about mutual friends then spiral into badmouthing them and theorising about why somebody is the way they are, only to remember it the next day and hate himself for participating in that nonsense. Processing all this is overwhelming for someone like Miki.

'Am I speaking to a nice person or is this a crazy person, or am I the crazy person?' And he doesn't even want to think about Mini. 'HAHAHA' – now Miki has laughed too hard.

Somebody repeats a joke for the third time ...

'SORRY, I only just got it, IT'S LIKE I HAVE ADHD!' says Miki, offending several people within earshot, and later on he will recall this sentence and feel bad.

Later on ... Miki is attempting to dance, but it doesn't look good. Then he stops dancing, but everybody else is on the dancefloor and he's by himself at the back. Since he's not dancing anymore, he goes to the computer and takes over the playlist. The first two songs go down well, but then he drifts too far into his own personal tastes and kills the vibe. Everybody in the flat splits apart, sitting in the separate rooms and at different tables.

Jopa comes out of the toilet and says, 'Go to the toilet, quick.'

Miki, stressed, runs into the loo without asking what he'll find in there. He's pissed off, and takes a bit of whatever it is. Back outside, he sees: people nodding off in leather chairs, torn nylon stockings, dark faces in the corner.

'What did I even take?' He sits down in a corner too, becoming a dark face himself.

Meanwhile, Mini is getting more and more angry ... Mini's life is not easy, and she sometimes has a tendency to take things too personally. The next person who asks her where she's from, she punches in the face. Everybody clusters around her.

'What's wrong with you? He was just showing an interest. He didn't mean anything by it.'

'Fuck you all!' shrieks Mini. 'I don't owe you an explanation. Not for my name and not for my background.'

A guy in the corner laughs.

'What are you laughing at? People like you make my life miserable.'

And Mini clobbers him. Full in the face with her fist. The guy goes down. Mini is stronger than many people suppose.

Kylie feels responsible – she should have known that Mini's liable to flip out on schnapps. She gives her the trousers and says, 'Come on, tomorrow we'll get all dolled up and go for breakfast.'

Mini punches Kylie.

'You and your fucking gold trousers. All I said was they look nice. Shove them up your arse, if you're so rich!'

Kylie hurls the trousers onto the floor and spits on them. 'You can die for all I care,' she says to Mini, and leaves the flat.

Mini is now on an aimless rampage, alternately crying and making threats.

'What have I become?'

'Mini, what's wrong?' asks somebody she knows.

'Why does everybody want to humiliate me?'

'The question isn't why everybody wants to humiliate you, the question is why everybody is able to humiliate you,' this person says, and Mini has no strength left to punch him, or to explain to him how many answers there are to that question.

Next morning ... The party ends much too late. People trudge home in the unbearable light of day. Later they will wake up and say, 'Well that was terrible, again.'

The End.