

# Bread

by Andy Backer

*Scene: A room. A table and four chairs. On the table is a cloth-wrapped parcel. There's a kitchen knife. There are four clean plates.*

*Darkness.*

*AT RISE: A MAN enters with a lamp, sets it on the table, and unwraps the parcel. He reveals a partial loaf of home-baked bread. He sits and looks at the bread for a moment. He looks at the door. He takes the knife and cuts off a slice of bread. He is extremely quiet. He places the piece of bread on one of the plates. He sits and stares at the bread. He turns off the lamp. He eats the bread by moonlight.*

*A WOMAN Enters after the MAN has eaten the bread. Only a few crumbs are left on his plate. He quietly stands up before the WOMAN is entirely in the room and can see him. She is dressed in a night dress and has on slippers. A warm blanket is wrapped around her shoulders. She sees the MAN. She sees the table, the bread, the crumbs on the plate. She says nothing.*

MAN. I thought I heard something. *(She looks at him.)* I thought there was someone in here. I heard something.

WOMAN. *(Waiting a bit, then with a sigh:)* I thought I heard something, too.

MAN. I thought someone was in here. *(Trying to think of something else to say, pauses, and then continues lamely.)* I heard something, and I thought someone was in here.

WOMAN. I heard it, too. *(She picks up the plate with crumbs and brushes it clean.)* But, it was probably nothing.

MAN. *(relieved)* It was probably nothing.

WOMAN. It was probably outside. *(Sets the plate down.)* Come to bed. You'll catch cold walking barefoot.

MAN. *(looking out a window)* Yes, it was probably something outside I heard. *(turning to her)* I thought it was in here.

WOMAN. *(with a shrug)* The tree always scrapes the screen when it's windy. It was probably the wind.

MAN. It was the wind! It was windy all night!

WOMAN. Yes.



MAN. It was probably the wind! *(pause)* The tree always scrapes the screen when it's windy.

WOMAN. It was the wind.

MAN. Uh-huh.

WOMAN. What else could it be? Why would anyone want to break in? There's nothing here to steal.

MAN. No.

WOMAN. They wouldn't steal the bread.

MAN. No.

WOMAN. Not our last loaf.

MAN. No.

WOMAN. Oh, how stupid of me! *(turning on the lamp)* The bread!

MAN. The bread?

WOMAN. I forgot to wrap it! You married a dumbbell!

MAN. It's unwrapped!

WOMAN. What a klutz I am! How forgetful!

MAN. Yes . . . it was . . . forgetful.

WOMAN. Well . . . Since it's unwrapped . . . *(picking up the knife)*

MAN. *(unnerved by the knife)* What?

WOMAN. *(slices a piece of bread from the loaf)* We'll eat.

MAN. Eat?

WOMAN. Come.

MAN. The bread?

WOMAN. Sit.

MAN. But . . .

WOMAN. Eat. *(She puts the slice in his plate.)*

MAN. *(pause)* And you?

WOMAN. *(She slices off another piece and puts it in her plate and sits.)* Eat.

MAN. The kids.

WOMAN. They'll eat tomorrow.

MAN. There's no more flour.

WOMAN. You'll find work. *(Pause. He stares at the bread in his plate.)* Eat, man . . .

MAN. But . . .

WOMAN. Eat.

MAN. *(He looks at her. She doesn't look away. He slowly sits. He touches the table. Hunger eventually wins and he nibbles on the bread.)* Good. It's so. . . good! . . . *(He loses control and is soon wolfing down the re-mainder. She watches him, wraps the*

*blanket around his shoulders, then puts her slice of bread in his plate.) What . . . ? What are you doing?*

WOMAN. Eat.

MAN. But . . .

WOMAN. I can't eat nights. My stomach won't take it.

MAN. But . . .

WOMAN. Eat. I'll eat tomorrow.

MAN. *(pause)* Yes. *(He starts nibbling on the bread.)* You'll eat tomorrow.

*(She watches him eat as the lights fade to black.)*

THE END