The Black and White
by Harold Pinter

The FIRST OLD WOMAN is sitting at a milk bar table. Small. A SECOND OLD WOMAN approaches. Tall. She is carrying two bowls of soup, which are covered by two plates, on each of which is a slice of bread. She puts the bowls down on the table carefully.

SECOND: You see that one come up and speak to me at the counter? (She takes the bread plates off the bowls, takes two spoons from her pocket, and places the bowls, plates and spoons.)

FIRST: You got the bread, then?
SECOND: I didn’t know how I was going to carry it. In the end I put the plates on top of the soup.

FIRST: I like a bit of bread with my soup. (They begin the soup. Pause.)
SECOND: Did you see that one come up and speak to me at the counter?
FIRST: Who?
SECOND: Comes up to me, he says, hullo, he says, what’s the time by your clock? Bloody liberty. I was just standing there getting your soup.
FIRST: It’s tomato soup.
SECOND: What’s the time by your clock? he says.
FIRST: I bet you answered him back.
SECOND: I told him all right. Go in, I said, why don’t you get back into your scraghole, I said, clear off out of it before I call a copper. (Pause)
FIRST: I not long got here.
SECOND: Did you get the all-night bus?
FIRST: I got the all-night bus straight here.
SECOND: Where from?
FIRST: Marble Arch.
SECOND: Which one?
FIRST: The two-nine-four, that takes me all the way to Fleet Street.
SECOND: So does the two-nine-one. (Pause) I see you talking to two strangers as I come in. You want to stop talking to strangers, old piece of boot like you, you mind who you talk to.
FIRST: I wasn’t talking to any strangers. (Pause. The FIRST OLD WOMAN follows the progress of a bus through the window.) That’s another all-night bus gone down. (Pause) I’ve never been up that way. (Pause) I’ve been down to Liverpool Street.
SECOND: Uh-uh.
FIRST: I've never fancied that direction much. (Pause)
SECOND: How's your bread? (Pause)
FIRST: Eh?
SECOND: Your bread.
FIRST: All right. How's yours? (Pause)
SECOND: They don't charge me for the bread if you have soup.
FIRST: They do if you have tea.
SECOND: If you have tea they do. (Pause) You talk to strangers they'll take you in. Mind my word. Coppers'll take you in.
FIRST: I don't talk to strangers.
SECOND: They took me away in the wagon once.
FIRST: They didn't keep you though.
SECOND: They didn't keep me, but that was only because they took a fancy to me. They took a fancy to me when they got me in the wagon.
FIRST: Do you think they'd take a fancy to me?
SECOND: I wouldn't bank on it. (The FIRST OLD WOMAN gazes out of the window.)
FIRST: You can see what goes on from this top table. (Pause.) It's better than going down to that place on the embankment, anyway.
SECOND: Yes, there's not too much noise.
FIRST: There's always a bit of noise.
SECOND: Yes, there's always a bit of life. (Pause.)
FIRST: I wouldn't mind staying.
SECOND: They won't let you.
FIRST: I know. (Pause) Still, they only close hour and half, don't they? (Pause) It's not long. (Pause) You can go along, then come back.
SECOND: I'm going. I'm not coming back.
FIRST: When it's light, I come back. Have my tea.
SECOND: I'm going. I'm going up to the Garden.
FIRST: I'm not going down there. (Pause) I'm going up to Waterloo Bridge.
SECOND: You'll just about see the last two-nine-six come up over the river.
FIRST: I'll just catch a look at it. Time I get up there. (Pause) It don't look like an all-night bus in daylight, do it?