

**Miro Gavran**

**COUPLES**

**(A Stage Mosaic)**

**Translation from Croatian into English:**

**Nina H. Kay - Antoljak**

## Biography

**MIRO GAVRAN** (1961) is a Croatian playwright and novelist, whose works have been translated into thirty-five languages. To date, his plays have had more than two hundred first nights worldwide and have been seen by more than two million theatre-goers.

He is the only living playwright in Europe to have a theatre festival devoted to his work; only plays based on his texts are performed at the **GAVRANFEST**, which was founded in Slovakia in 2003 and is held every year.

His major plays include: CREON'S ANTIGONE, NIGHT OF THE GODS, GEORGE WASHINGTON'S LOVES, CHEKHOV SAYS GOOD-BYE TO TOLSTOY, ALL ABOUT WOMEN, ALL ABOUT MEN, DOCTOR FREUD'S PATIENT, HOTEL BABYLON, HOW TO KILL THE PRESIDENT, NORA IN OUR TIME, GRETA GARBO'S SECRET, PARALLEL WORLDS, THE CRAZIEST SHOW IN THE WORLD, MY WIFE'S HUSBAND, FORGET HOLLYWOOD and DEATH OF AN ACTOR. They have had first nights in Zagreb, Rotterdam, Maribor, Washington, Paris, Krakow, Sofia, Mumbai, Vilnius, Brno, Buenos Aires, Ljubljana, Pécs, Tokyo, Bratislava, Prague, Augsburg, Waterford, Rome, Warsaw, Avignon, Belgrade, Athens, Sarajevo, Novi Sad, Mostar, Podgorica, Priština, Budapest, Vienna, Moscow, Rio de Janeiro, Tirana, and some fifty other cities. For the past twenty years, Gavran has been the most highly performed Croatian playwright at home and abroad.

[www.mirogavran.com](http://www.mirogavran.com)

E-mail: [miro.gavran@zg.t-com.hr](mailto:miro.gavran@zg.t-com.hr)

The cast consists of three male and three female actors, who play all the roles.

**FIRST ACTRESS:**

(Anna, Petra, Tina, Ranka)

**SECOND ACTRESS:**

(Maria, Ena, Lola, Marta)

**THIRD ACTRESS:**

(Nera, Anita, Lada, Buba)

**FIRST ACTOR:**

(Ivo, Boris, Edo, Tony)

**SECOND ACTOR:**

(Robert, Drago, Boki, Franjo)

**THIRD ACTOR:**

(Alan, Damir, Leo, Vlado)

The characters according to the stories:

**SUMMER HOLIDAYS**

Anita .....40 years old  
Boris .....40 years old  
Petra .....30 years old  
Damir .....30 years old  
Ena .....42 years old  
Drago .....44 years old

**GIVING BIRTH**

Lada .....30 years old  
Tony .....30 years old  
Marta .....30 years old

**COMPUTER MAN**

Ranka .....35 years old  
Franjo .....35 years old  
Vlado .....38 years old

**FAREWELL LETTER**

Leo .....46 years old  
Buba .....45 years old

**AT WORK**

Anna .....30 years old  
Maria .....38 years old  
Nera .....32 years old  
Ivo .....32 years old  
Robert .....34 years old  
Alan .....45 years old

**POLICEMEN**

Edo .....52 years old

Tina .....23 years old  
Lola .....53 years old  
Boki .....29 years old

### Scene 1.

#### A) SUMMER HOLIDAYS (a terrace)

(Anita, Ena and Drago come out onto the terrace. It is summertime; all three are dressed in summer clothes. Ena is carrying one holdall and Drago the other.)

**ANITA:** Here, we serve our guests breakfast every morning out on this terrace. You can also use it during the day. You share the terrace with the guests from the other apartment.

**ENA:** What's the difference between the two apartments?

**ANITA:** The internal arrangement is the same, but yours has sea-view and their apartment looks out onto the woods. Yours is considerably better.

**DRAGO:** What's the sea like?

**ANITA:** Warm and clean. Otherwise, you have chosen a good day for the beginning of your summer holiday – there's a Fisherman's Evening on the main square tonight. There will be Dalmatian *klapa*-singing, grilled fish, and some entertainers are coming from Split. Our local *klapa*-singers who won third prize at the Omiš Festival last summer will also be performing.

**DRAGO:** How far is it to the nearest beach?

**ANITA:** Five minutes. You can also go to the Roman diggings that are only some 200 metres away. All the tourists visit them.

**DRAGO:** Do you have guests in the other apartment now?

**ANITA:** My husband left fifteen minutes ago to pick up a honeymooning couple at the bus-stop. They'll be here any minute. They are from Osijek. The young gentleman had his driver's licence confiscated for a month, so they had to travel by bus. This is their honeymoon, although they will be getting married only in the autumn.

**DRAGO:** How can you have a honeymoon before you get married?

**ANITA:** That I don't know. Let's go to see your apartment!

**DRAGO:** OK!

(They go through the left-hand door into the left-hand apartment. A moment later Boris, Petra and Damir come onto the terrace. Boris and Damir are each carrying a holdall.)

**BORIS:** Here we are, this is the terrace I spoke about. Breakfast is usually at 9 o'clock, but you can make other arrangements with my wife if you like. You are lucky that they will be having the Fishermen's Evening tonight. Our own local *klapa*-singing group *Maestral*, which won third prize at the Omiš Festival last year, will be performing. They are great.

**PETRA:** How far is the sea?

**BORIS:** Not even five minutes. And the diggings from Roman times are here in the next street. There was a documentary on them on TV last month.

**DAMIR:** What's the sea like?

**BORIS:** Warm. I haven't been swimming yet this year, but everyone says it's warm. You can see your apartment now. It's better than the other one – there's more shade, thanks to the woods.

**DAMIR:** So we don't have a sea-view?

**BORIS:** No, you don't.

(They exit through the right-hand door that leads to the right-hand apartment. A moment later Anita, Ena and Drago come back onto the terrace from the left-hand apartment.)

**ANITA:** I hope you will enjoy it here.

**ENA:** Enjoy is perhaps too strong a word. You know, when you are on holiday it's not enough to have a good apartment and a clean sea; what's most important is who you are with. And good luck has not smiled on me in that department.

**DRAGO:** Nor me.

(Silence.)

**ENA:** Are you from near here?

**ANITA:** No. My wife and I are from Zagreb - Zagreb born and bred.

**ENA:** It's lovely here. A sweet little village, peace and quiet, and untouched Nature.

**ANITA:** Yes. Real heaven on earth! We started to dream about how wonderful it would be if I left my teaching job, and my husband gave notice at his factory. He is a mechanical engineer. It was only when my aunt died five years ago and left us her house that we could decide on moving.

**ENA:** Your dreams came true.

**ANITA:** You could say that.

(Silence.)

**ANITA:** If you need anything, I'll be in the kitchen, just ring.

**ENA:** Of course, thank you.

(Anita exits).

**ENA:** I think that this was a stupid idea.

**DRAGO:** Why?

**ENA:** You are the last person with whom I would want to spend two weeks on holiday.

**DRAGO:** I'm still your husband.

**ENA:** Unfortunately.

**DRAGO:** Other people don't have to know what's going on between us.

**ENA:** I don't care about other people. I'm asking myself how my stomach will stand your proximity during the next two weeks. You are disgusting. You make me sick. This is pure masochism.

**DRAGO:** We can at least be polite and make these days easier for each other. That would be best for both of us and for our children.

**ENA:** It's only for their sake that I agreed to this torture.

**DRAGO:** Do you think it is any easier for me?

**ENA:** I couldn't give a damn for you and how you feel.

## **Scene 2.**

### **A) GIVING BIRTH** (A hospital corridor.)

(Tony is holding a bunch of telegrams and nervously pacing up and down along the hospital corridor. Lada appears, wearing a hospital smock.)

**TONY:** How are you?

**LADA:** I'm fine.

**TONY:** And our son?

**LADA:** He's fine, too.

**TONY:** Would you like to sit down?

**LADA:** No. It hurts a bit when I sit down. It's easier for me like this, standing.

**TONY:** What does the doctor say?

**LADA:** We can go home tomorrow.

**TONY:** Wonderful! Everything is ready.

**LADA:** Some vulgar village woman gave birth last night. They put her in my room. She talked about her life all through the night. Too awful for words! I can hardly wait to go home.

**TONY:** Look! We have received another nine telegrams – your bother, my godmother from Australia, Anita and Dražen, the Marijanović family from the seaside, colleagues from your office. . . Here, take them and read them. They all send their best wishes, to you and to me, and to the little one.

**LADA:** All quite expectable and not in the least original.

**TONY:** What else can they do except congratulate us in the usual way?

**LADA:** One should also have a bit of style here, too. Especially if you hold a degree, if you are an intellectual who has read at least a few books.

**TONY:** Alright then, but aren't you pleased with the congratulations and good wishes of our friends?

(Silence.)

**LADA:** Two telegrams arrived directly at the hospital this morning.

**TONY:** Really? Who were they from?

**LADA:** One was from my cousin in Zadar, and one from your former girlfriend.

**TONY:** From Marta?

**LADA:** Yes, from Marta.

(Silence.)

**TONY:** And what did she say?

**LADA:** Who? My cousin or your ex?

**TONY:** My ex.

**LADA:** Quite banal and predictable – she congratulates us on the birth of our child, with a wish that he brings us a lot of joy in life.

**TONY:** That's nice.

**LADA:** I don't know what's nice about it and I don't know why she sent that telegram at all. It is so irritating, so insolent.

**TONY:** Why? She is wishing us well and that is that. She used to be your friend once, she went out with me for three years. We used to socialise.

**LADA:** We socialised until you left her after starting up with me. I don't have anything to do with her anymore. I haven't seen her for a year, and I hope I shall never see her again. She has her world, and we have ours. I don't know why she needs to mess around with our baby, why is she sending us a telegram and reminding us of her existence? I hope you are no longer in contact with her?

**TONY:** No, I'm not. The last time I saw her was in the street two months ago. We just said 'hello' and didn't stop. I have told you that already.

**LADA:** And you haven't spoken on the phone since then?

**TONY:** No, I haven't.

**LADA:** When I get home, if she phones to congratulate me, you will say that I'm asleep. You will find a way to let her know that we don't want to have anything to do with her.

(Silence.)

**LADA:** Why don't you say something?

**TONY:** She never did anything bad to you or to me. It is hard for me to be rude to someone you never did anything bad to me.

**LADA:** I am not saying that you should be rude; I am only saying that you have to tell her directly that we don't need her in our lives. And this telegram of hers – that is a cheeky challenge, a provocation, a clear sign that she will try to get close to us again. Forgive me, but, as your wife, I am not prepared to tolerate that. I simply don't believe that people who used to be boyfriend and girlfriend in the past can be friends in the future.

**TONY:** But she's your friend, too.

**LADA:** Not any more she isn't, and she never will be again.

### Scene 3.

A) **COMPUTER MAN** (A living room.)

(Ranka is laying the plates for lunch. Franjo comes into the room wearing a spring blazer, and carrying a briefcase.)

**FRANJO:** Hey!

**RANKA:** Hey!

(Franjo puts down the briefcase, takes off his jacket, and walks towards the door leading into another room.)

**RANKA:** Where are you going?

**FRANJO:** To turn on the computer.

**RANKA:** Lunch is ready. Just for once you could eat first and go onto the computer only after that.

**FRANJO:** Perhaps I have an important mail.

**RANKA:** The mail won't disappear. We can have lunch first and talk about what it was like at work for both of us, and then. . .

**FRANJO:** Come on, stop nagging! I'll just check my mail and we can eat then.

(Franjo goes into the other room. Ranka continues setting the table. After a while, Franjo comes back into the room.)

**FRANJO:** It's a disaster!

**RANKA:** What is?

**FRANJO:** My computer's on the blink. The screen is black.

**RANKA:** Did you try to reset it?

**FRANJO:** Nothing helps. There's no contact. I have to call that technician immediately.

**RANKA:** At least we will have some peace over the weekend.

**FRANJO:** What's gotten into you, woman? It's Thursday today! Monday is in four days time. I want the technician here tomorrow to fix it. The last thing on my mind is to spend the whole weekend cut off from the world.

**RANKA:** But I'm working until one o'clock tomorrow!

**FRANJO:** That's right, but I am working until three. I'll call him and, if he can, he can come at half-past one. You will get home to the flat in half an hour.

**RANKA:** I was planning to go shopping after work.

**FRANJO:** Forget about shopping! This is much more important. We can go shopping on Saturday afternoon.

#### **Scene 4.**

##### **B) SUMMER HOLIDAYS (The terrace.)**

(Petra, Damir, Ena and Drago are sitting on the terrace. They are playing cards. The sound of light rain. They are throwing cards out onto the table, saying nothing as they do so. This goes on for quite some time.)

**ENA:** Bloody holidays! You pay through the nose for an apartment, believe you will be swimming in the sea and sun-bathing, and first of all the *bura* south wind starts blowing, and then it rains, and your summer break transforms into a winter holiday.

**DRAGO:** Pure shit! And besides all that, your wife is nervy and hysterical.

**ENA:** Cut the crap!

**DRAGO:** She wasn't so vulgar when I married her. When I met her she gave off the impression of a well brought-up young lady. . . And then, one day, she started to talk.

**ENA:** Don't tempt me!

(Silence.)

**DAMIR:** Thank goodness that you two are here; at least we have someone to talk to and play cards with.

**PETRA:** Look, it nice even without swimming. What's important is that we are far away from work and our obligations. I haven't slept so well in a long time.

**ENA:** I tossed and turned all night.

**DRAGO:** The noise made by the rain got on my nerves. So monotonous. . . it drives you crazy.

**DAMIR:** I didn't hear it.

(He throws down his last cards.)

**DAMIR:** We win!

**DRAGO:** I always said that men are better at cards than you women.

**PETRA:** That's because we don't care about winning the way you do.

**DRAGO:** Perhaps.

**ENA:** I saw that colourful poster – some male strippers are performing in the village tomorrow. The two of us could go. Would you like to go with me?

**PETRA:** I have never seen strippers live. But I can't leave Damir alone. What will he do without me?

**DRAGO:** He can watch the soccer match with me. France and Argentina are playing tomorrow. That's something I wouldn't want to miss.

**DAMIR:** Nor me.

**ENA:** So, let our blokes watch the soccer, and the two of us can go to watch the strippers who are younger and better built than our husbands.

**PETRA:** I don't really know if I want to go.

**DRAGO:** I have to go to the shop to buy the papers.

**DAMIR:** I'll go with you.

**PETRA:** Take your umbrellas.

**DRAGO:** There are two in the car.

**DAMIR:** Great.

**PETRA:** Do you know what you have to buy?

**DAMIR:** Yes, I do. The list's in my pocket. See 'ya.

**PETRA:** 'Bye, darling!

(Damir and Petra kiss good-bye. A moment later Damir and Drago exit.)

**ENA:** So, are we going to see the strippers?

**PETRA:** I am not sure that Damir won't mind.

**ENA:** Now, at the beginning of your relationship, you have to get him used to sometimes "swallowing" what he doesn't really like.

**PETRA:** What if he gets angry?

**ENA:** That's the very reason that you should go with me. Surely you are not going to sit here and watch the match with him.

**PETRA:** No. . .

(Silence.)

**PETRA:** I shall be frank – you have been confusing me all this time.

**ENA:** Who?

**PETRA:** You and your husband.

**ENA:** Because of our harsh words?

**PETRA:** Because of everything.

**ENA:** You heard us quarrelling last night?

**PETRA:** Yes, I heard you. You were louder even than the rain. What's the problem?

(Silence.)

**ENA:** Two months ago he went on a business trip to The Netherlands. He went to a brothel with a colleague. I found out about it a week after he came back. He screwed a whore for money. He has offended me deeply. I have decided to divorce him.

**PETRA:** Didn't you try to talk it over?

**ENA:** I find him simply disgusting. There's no way back. We have sent our son and our daughter to Ireland for a course in English, and the two of us have come here hoping to talk things over peacefully about who the children will be with, who gets the house in Zagreb, and who the cottage in Zagorje. He wants our son to live with him. . . but I want my son and daughter to live with me. So that we don't separate them. He has suggested that we try to avoid the war that most couples go through when they are divorcing, that we don't tell anyone until we agree on things, not my parents or his mother, before we have worked out the details around the divorce. I agreed because of the children, but. . .

**PETRA:** Do the children know?

**ENA:** No, they don't. Although they have probably sensed something. Unwittingly, we had two harsh arguments in front of them.

**PETRA:** Surely it will all be settled.

**ENA:** No, it won't.

(Silence.)

**PETRA:** How did he explain it?

**ENA:** What?

**PETRA:** Going to a brothel.

**ENA:** He said that he had been drunk, that his colleague talked him into it, that he was curious to see what a cat-house looked like, that he didn't intend to do anything, that he loves only me. . . Bullshit!

(Silence.)

**ENA:** But what about this honeymoon of yours? This is the first time that I have heard of anyone going on their honeymoon before the wedding?

**PETRA:** Well. . . my father is paying for it. When he heard that we had set the date for our wedding in autumn, he said that it would be better if he treated us with a summer holiday. Although I have a feeling that there is something else behind it.

**ENA:** What would that be?

**PETRA:** Damir and I have been together for only a month, and we have never spent even a day under the same roof. My father does not think that we are right for each other, he thinks we don't know each other at all, so he wants us to experience a "trial marriage" as soon as possible. To check if we really are right for one another.

**ENA:** And you?

**PETRA:** What about me?

**ENA:** Do you have doubts, too?

**PETRA:** I don't have any doubts. . . although. . .

(Anita and Boris come out onto the terrace carrying a bowl of figs and a bowl of grapes.)

**ANITA:** I hope we are not interrupting anything?

**PETRA:** Not at all.

**ANITA:** Here, something sweet. At least that when you can't go swimming.

(They put the bowls of fruit on the table.)

**BORIS:** This rain will pass. In a day or two.

**ENA:** That's what we hope, too.

(Petra takes a grape and eats it.)

**PETRA:** It's sweet.

**BORIS:** The very best. They grow here.

**ENA:** Something's not right with the drain in our bathroom.

**BORIS:** Really? I have a look at it today. If I don't know how to fix it myself, I'll call a plumber.

**PETRA:** And we have a problem with our water tank.

**ANITA:** What sort of problem?

**PETRA:** After you flush the toilet, the tank fills for as much as twenty minutes or so, and makes a lot of noise the entire time. It's a nuisance!

**BORIS:** I'll have a look when there is no-one in your apartments.

**PETRA:** We could go for a walk now, and you could get to it right away.

**BORIS:** In this rain?

**PETRA:** It doesn't bother me. Are you for a walk?

**ENA:** Yes. I have had my fill of apartments and terraces. Let's go!

**ANITA:** You'll find some umbrellas in the corridor.

**BORIS:** I bought five of them.

**ENA:** Excellent. We'll take yours. Ours are already falling apart.

(Petra and Ena exit.)

**ANITA:** And now the graduate mechanical engineer and the graduate teacher of mathematics will be picking other people's hairs out of the bath and fixing the siphon and the water tank.

**BORIS:** Is that really so difficult?

**ANITA:** It is for me. My stomach turns over at even the thought. I have had my fill of this back of beyond, and the local people, and the spoilt tourists.

**BORIS:** Come on now, the season lasts less than three months, and we can live off that for the whole year.

**ANITA:** But it's not a real life. Only an empty existence. During the winter I feel like a lazy pensioner, and during the summer like an exhausted hotel housemaid. I don't know which is worst.

**BORIS:** Was it better for you when you were teaching mathematics?

**ANITA:** At least I had someone to talk to during school recesses. I was a maths teacher with a degree, and now I'm a housemaid.

**BORIS:** The pupils and the parents got on your nerves then, but now. . . We have made our dreams come true.

**ANITA:** You're raving, what dreams. . . You surely aren't going to tell me that you are happy here? Apart from to two pubs full of over-the-hill sailors, there is nowhere for you to go out.

**BORIS:** Surely our happiness is not determined by other people.

**ANITA:** Don't you miss the cinema, the theatre, Zagreb, the concerts, the people, and all the goings-on?

**BORIS:** We were delighted to get away from all that.

**ANITA:** You see, now that seems to me to have been our greatest mistake.

**BORIS:** You are talking nonsense. Everyone envies us for having made our dreams come true. We are our own bosses, we don't have to get up at dawn and travel to work. Life has never been better for me.

**ANITA:** And I have never felt so miserable.

### **Scene 5.**

#### **B) GIVING BIRTH (A café.)**

(Marta is sitting on a bar stool in an average Zagreb café. There are two glasses of juice on the table in front of her. Tony approaches her.)

**TONY:** Hey!

**MARTA:** Hey!

**TONY:** I'm late, I'm sorry.

**MARTA:** You're not late. I came ten minutes early. I have ordered us juice.

**TONY:** Thank you.

**MARTA:** How is Lada?

**TONY:** She's good.

**MARTA:** And your son?

**TONY:** He's very good. He is fifty-two centimetres long and weighs three and a half kilograms. They are coming out of hospital tomorrow.

**MARTA:** I'm glad to hear it. . . Your sister told me. . . that you had had a baby.

**TONY:** I didn't know you were in touch.

**MARTA:** We hear each other from time to time.

(Silence.)

**TONY:** And how are you?

**MARTA:** Everything's pretty much the same.

**TONY:** I heard that you had received a promotion at work.

**MARTA:** Who told you that?

**TONY:** Anita!

**MARTA:** I'm managing an extra department and my pay is slightly higher. Everything else is the same.

(Silence. Tony looks at his watch.)

**MARTA:** Are you in a hurry to go somewhere?

**TONY:** No, I'm not. Sorry. I still have that tic. I keep on checking the time. When I need to and when I don't.

**MARTA:** I do that, too, sometimes. We all work too much. Some civilisations fell because of too little work, this one will implode from too much work.

**TONY:** True enough.

(Silence.)

**MARTA:** Your call surprised me. Why did you want us to meet so urgently?

**TONY:** I don't know how to tell you. . .

**MARTA:** Tell me straight. Anything you want to say to me you can tell me straight.

**TONY:** It's like this. . . when I called you. . . that was when I was leaving the maternity hospital. . . Lada was a bit upset today. . and she passed it on to me. . . But, because of the state she is in now. . . it's logical that her reactions are a bit hasty and impulsive.

**MARTA:** What is it that you are trying to say?

**TONY:** Well. . . it's not important. We had best leave the subject alone. We can chat a bit, it's been a long time since we did.

(Silence.)

**MARTA:** When you rang me around noon and asked that we meet urgently, I cancelled an outing with my girlfriends that I had myself arranged so that I could meet you, and you have

taken the liberty of changing your mind in the meantime? Why did you ask me to come to this café!

(Silence.)

**MARTA:** Come on – spill what’s on your soul and don’t hold anything back. Even if it is unpleasant to hear. I can take it. I have learnt that when you are in question.

(Silence.)

**TONY:** That telegram you sent. . . that’s what upset her.

**MARTA:** But why?

**TONY:** She saw it as a provocation, as if you were meddling in our lives.

**MARTA:** That was not my intention.

**TONY:** I know.

**MARTA:** That telegram was a sign of my forgiveness. I forgave you and I forgave her. That was only a hand extended in conciliation, nothing more and nothing less.

**TONY:** She understood it differently.

**MARTA:** Apart from forgiveness and a wish that bygones be bygones, there was nothing else in that telegram, and especially nothing ugly. In any case, she has been my friend since we were students, and you are the man I went out with for three long years. . . What’s so strange about me congratulating you both on the birth of your child? I hope you’re not angry, too.

**TONY:** Not at all.

**MARTA:** Is that why we had to meet in such a rush in this café?

**TONY:** I’m sorry, but, all of this seems to her to be. . . overdone. There. . . I wanted you to know that she is sensitive now and that everything can upset her.

**MARTA:** She’s sensitive?

**TONY:** Yes, she’s sensitive.

**MARTA:** That’s logical. Any woman in her place would be sensitive three days after giving birth.

**TONY:** I’m so glad that you understand.

**MARTA:** Of course I understand.

**TONY:** It’s simply that – your telegram upset her and offended her.

**MARTA:** I'm sorry about that. It's very nice of you to take care that your former girlfriend does not offend your present wife. I admire that. But I would admire it even more if you had ever taken the trouble that she did not offend me, either.

**TONY:** What does that mean?

**MARTA:** You made love behind my back for three months. My friend and my boyfriend. When you told me that you wanted to break off with me, I sensed that there must be someone new in the game. But it didn't even occur to me that it could be Lada.

(Silence.)

**TONY:** I didn't know how to tell you without hurting you. You were so irritable and nervy at that time. You even avoided making love with me. I felt that you did not care about me any more. I couldn't even talk to you in a normal way.

**MARTA:** You probably know why I was irritable and nervy then. Even Lada knew. . .since you were so close, she must have told you?

**TONY:** What are you talking about?

**MARTA:** Are you pretending that you did not know?

**TONY:** What are you trying to say?

**MARTA:** I was throwing up, I was nervy, I was avoiding sex with you – it should not have been so hard to work out what was going on with me.

**TONY:** What?

**MARTA:** I was pregnant.

(Silence.)

**MARTA:** I felt uncomfortable that you had not proposed to me before that. . . I did not want you to think that I was pressuring you. I was sure that, as soon as you realised, you would come to me with a small box holding a ring and ask me to marry you. But it did not happen. Forgive me for my pregnancy and my nerviness. . . Instead of a wedding, you suggested that we break it off, claiming that our relationship had worn out like a pair of old shoes and that it would be better for both of us if we both went our separate ways. Naturally enough, you did not forget to add that you hoped we would remain friends.

**TONY:** Wait a minute! Are you telling me that you were pregnant, that you were carrying my child?

**MARTA:** Exactly that.

**TONY:** Why didn't you tell me?

**MARTA:** As if that would have changed anything!

**TONY:** Of course it would have.

**MARTA:** And you're saying that you didn't know?

**TONY:** I swear that I didn't know.

(Silence.)

**MARTA:** When you said you wanted us to break up, it shattered me. You disgusted me. I didn't want to fight for you. I didn't want to humiliate myself and to enter into a shotgun wedding with my former love. I went to a gynaecologist the next day and asked for an urgent abortion.

(Silence.)

**TONY:** I rang you on your cell phone for days. You had it switched off. Your colleagues at work told me that you had taken leave and were travelling somewhere. Nobody knew where. I thought that you didn't want to have anything more to do with me.

**MARTA:** Everything became complicated at the time of the abortion. I killed our child, but I almost killed myself, too. Only after a few days the doctor told me that I would never be able to have a child. I shall never be a mother. Never.

(Silence.)

**TONY:** I am so sorry. Forgive me.

**MARTA:** In only a few days I lost everything. . . I hated you and I hated her. I even found myself hoping that your baby would never be born either. What a disaster! Finally I realised that only forgiveness would bring any peace of mind to you and to me. We had inflicted enough wounds on each other. I sent that telegram so that you would know that I had forgiven you both for deceiving me. . . and I wanted to offer a hand in friendship in that way. Now I can see that your wife is afraid of my presence in your lives – so it's clear to me that this will have to be our last conversation.

(Silence.)

**TONY:** I am the one who owes you an apology. I'm the only one who has to apologise.

**MARTA:** It doesn't make any difference now, anyway. Go ahead and enjoy your happiness and be good to that child. It's never the children who are at fault.

**TONY:** I know – that's what they say.

(TONY stands up and goes towards the door. He stops and returns to Marta.)

**TONY:** Even though it's not important any more and even if this is our last conversation, I want you to know that you were the only one I ever really loved. I don't feel anything towards her. She attracted me in the beginning and that was all.

**MARTA:** Please don't speak in that way about the mother of your child. For the sake of the three of you, never ever say anything bad about her again.

**TONY:** I won't. Please forgive me for all this.

**MARTA:** Good-bye!

**TONY:** Good-bye!

## Scene 6.

**B) COMPUTER MAN** (The living room.)

(Ranka comes into the room wearing a spring jacket, with her handbag hanging from her shoulder. She puts down the bag, and then takes off her jacket. At the moment, the door-bell rings. Ranka opens the door. Vlado comes in. He is holding a tool-bag.)

**VLADO:** Good afternoon.

**RANKA:** Good afternoon.

**VLADO:** I came a bit earlier.

**RANKA:** It's no problem – I arrived a minute ago.

**VLADO:** If I remember correctly, the computer is in that room?

**RANKA:** That's right.

**VLADO:** I'd like to start right away. . .

**RANKA:** Wait!

**VLADO:** I'm in quite a hurry – you weren't in my schedule for today. If your husband had not insisted so much, I would have left you for Monday. I still have two calls to make. . .

**RANKA:** There's nothing wrong with his computer.

**VLADO:** Nothing wrong? Why did he call me then?

(Ranka holds out a small metal platelet.)

**RANKA:** I removed this from his computer.

(Vlado takes the platelet out of Ranka's hand.)

**VLADO:** It won't work without this.

**RANKA:** I know.

**VLADO:** But . . . why then. . . ?

**RANKA:** Please, take the computer to "repair" it and keep it there for at least five days.

**VLADO:** How am I supposed to explain that to him?

**RANKA:** Think of something. We have been married for four years. . . As far as he is concerned, I don't even exist. As soon as he comes home from work he goes straight to the computer and stays there until midnight. We never go out, we don't have any children, and it's not a marriage any more. That's why I did it.

(Silence.)

**VLADO:** This is not a solution.

**RANKA:** He is addicted to that device. He won't agree to counselling. I couldn't think of a better idea. I want him for myself for at least a few days. He doesn't even notice me.

(Ranka breaks into tears. Vlado hands her a paper tissue.)

**VLADO:** Please calm down, please. I shall help you as much as I can. Everything will be alright.

(Ranka cries even harder.)

## **Scene 7.**

**A) AT WORK** (An office.)

(Anna, Nera, Maria and Ivo are sitting at their desks in the office. They are concentrated on their paper work. The door opens and Robert walks in carrying a bottle of champagne.)

**NERA:** Look who's here!

**ROBERT:** Hello everybody!

**IVO:** How did the engagement party go?

**ROBERT:** It was great!

**MARIA:** Congratulations!

**ROBERT:** Thank you!

**ANNA:** My heartfelt congratulations.

(Anna kisses his cheek.)

**ROBERT:** Thank you!

**IVO:** Congratulations, old man!

**ROBERT:** Thank you!

**NERA:** Way to go, dear colleague! Here's a kiss for you!

(Nera, too, kisses his cheek.)

**ROBERT:** Thank you, Nera.

**NERA:** Didn't you take a day off today?

**ROBERT:** Yes, I did. I only came in to treat you all. My dear fiancée is looking through the shelves at the shopping centre across the street.

**IVO:** You're a real mate. We have some glasses here.

(Ivo takes some glasses out of a drawer.)

**IVO:** They're not champagne glasses, but they'll do.

**MARIA:** How many guests were there at the engagement party?

**ROBERT:** Around fifty.

**NERA:** My goodness, so many!

**ROBERT:** Well, she has a large family. Her parents did not want to offend any of their relatives, so they invited them all. From my side, only my mother, my father and my brother were there.

(Robert opens the champagne and pours some into all of their glasses.)

**NERA:** Careful you don't spill it.

**IVO:** Just a little bit for me.

**ROBERT:** OK.

**ANNA:** Cheers!

**IVO:** Here's to you and your lady love!

**EVERYONE:** Cheers!

(They all drink.)

**MARIA:** This is excellent champagne!

**NERA:** It has the aroma of freshly picked peaches.

**IVO:** Look. . . this business of getting engaged – it all sounds a bit nineteenth century to me.

**ROBERT:** To me, too. But we had to because of her father. He objected if she stayed over for the night at my place. . . Her family is a bit patriarchal. You know, they're from that part of the country. I thought: better that we get engaged rather than their putting pressure on her at home. And if anything goes wrong, this is not so serious. After all, it's not a wedding – it's much simpler.

**MARIA:** What do you mean?

**ROBERT:** Separation is easier. And since we don't formally live together, there is no problem with joint marital property and all that shit.

**MARIA:** As far as I'm concerned, an engagement is the same as a wedding.

**NERA:** Where did you get that idea?

**MARIA:** Your word is your word. Your troth is your troth.

**IVO:** Come on now, we are not still in the Middle Ages.

(Alan comes into the room.)

**ALAN:** What are you doing here?

**ROBERT:** Hello, Boss, just at the right moment, I came in to treat you all. Would you like a glass?

**ALAN:** Congratulation on your engagement, but excuse me – I don't feel at all like drinking. And I'm afraid you won't when I tell you the news.

**NERA:** What news?

**ALAN:** Just ten minutes ago, the meeting with the general manager ended. The son of the majority owner from Vienna was there, too.

**MARIA:** And, what do they say?

**ALAN:** Nothing good. They have done the final accounts. Since sales went down by 20% here in Croatia last year, they have decided that we have to re-organise and to fire 20% of the staff by the end of the month.

**ANNA:** Fire 20% of our people?

**ALAN:** That's right. And those that are left will have to undertake to re-distribute the clients that were being handled by those who will be leaving.

**IVO:** Surely we are not to blame for the world crisis and for the reduction in the use of medication. People simply have less money than they used to.

**ALAN:** That does not interest the owners of our firm. They want a clear re-organisation plan by the end of the month. Since you five are in this sector, it must be obvious to you that a 20% cut means that one of you will have to go.

(Silence.)

**ANNA:** Oh, shit!

**ALAN:** I'm sorry, but I had to share that with you. Robert, once again, congratulations on your engagement. Did my telegram arrive?

**ROBERT:** Yes, it did. My fiancée was very pleased.

**ALAN:** I expect each one of you to hand in a written proposal by the end of the week on how this sector could increase sales. Next week I shall be deciding on who will be leaving. Believe me, it won't be easy.

**NERA:** If you have to – you have to.

**ALAN:** And by the way, Robert, it is prohibited to bring alcohol into the office. The fine is Fifty Euros according to the Vienna By-Laws. Wrap that bottle in newspaper as soon as possible and take it out of the building so that no-one notices. Otherwise, I personally shall have to report you. All I need is a rumour that alcohol is being consumed in my sector.

**ROBERT:** Of course.

(Alan exits. Robert finds a newspaper and wraps the bottle in it.)

**ROBERT:** He made a balls-up of my celebration.

**IVO:** But he sent you a telegram.

**ROBERT:** Give me a break.

**ANNA:** This is terrible news, really terrible!

**NERA:** You're a single mother, statistically speaking they are most frequently spared.

**ANNA:** It seems to me that they always spare the unmarried and the unencumbered.

**MARIA:** What do those statistics say about married women with two children?

**NERA:** It's the same whether you have one child or three.

**IVO:** I took out a loan for a flat last month.

**ROBERT:** We all have loans, that won't save any of us.

**IVO:** That's what they should look at most when firing people.

**NERA:** Surely it's more important what kind of worker you are.

**ROBERT:** I'm off. . .before someone comes along and sees the bottle. This engagement has drained me financially, I don't have the money to pay any unnecessary fines.

**ANNA:** 'Bye then!

**ROBERT:** 'Bye everyone!

## Scene 8

### A) POLICEMEN (Father's flat / Mother's flat)

(The left part of the set is Father's flat, and the right Mother's flat. Edo and his daughter Tina are in Father's flat. Lola and her son Boki are in the right-hand, Mother's flat. The action alternates from flat to flat; when there is dialogue in one flat, the actors in the other flat are "frozen" in their movements and are in half-darkness.)

### FATHER'S FLAT

(Edo, the father, is reading *Sports News*, his daughter Tina enter carrying a small case.)

**TINA:** Hey, Dad.

**EDO:** Hello Tina. How was it?

**TINA:** It was great. A lovely weekend. We strolled beside the sea, and he took me to fish restaurants. I met some more of his friends. They are so witty and relaxed. . . But I have to go to University again tomorrow.

**EDO:** And the summer house?

**TINA:** It's lovely. In the first row beside the sea. At the very entrance to Novi. It was an old building but Filip had it restored. They retained the old stone walls, but the décor inside is very modern.

**EDO:** He's very capable this young man of yours.

**TINA:** Oh yes, very. . . You know what, something extraordinary happened today, something wonderful.

**EDO:** And what's was that?

**TINA:** He asked me to marry him.

**EDO:** Really?

### **MOTHER'S FLAT**

(Boki is sitting at a table reading the paper. His mother Lola comes into the room.)

**LOLA:** There was a bottle of herbal brandy in the fridge.

**BOKI:** Yes, there was.

**LOLA:** Where is it now?

**BOKI:** I don't know, Mama, I must have drunk it.

**LOLA:** You are lying! You don't drink.

**BOKI:** I do sometimes.

**LOLA:** What are you playing at?

**BOKI:** Nothing.

**LOLA:** So now I have to go to the shop. Because of you, I have to go out at ten at night to look for a shop that is still open. You poured the brandy down the sink – the entire kitchen smells of it. Don't ever dare do that to me again, unless you want me to get seriously angry at you. You act like a police inspector at home, too, as if you were at your police station. As if you have a criminal in front of you and not your own mother.

**BOKI:** Mama, we have to have a serious talk. It can't be put off any longer. It's the last minute.

### **FATHER'S FLAT**

**TINA:** Just before we left for Zagreb, he said: "I would like you to marry me, for this to be our courtyard one day with our children running around, and for them to go swimming with us at the beach."

**EDO:** And you? Surely you asked for time to think it over.

**TINA:** I was delighted. I accepted. I know you want me to get my degree first – I do my finals in two months, and we can have the wedding the following day!

(Silence.)

**TINA:** Aren't you happy about it?

**EDO:** No, I'm not.

**TINA:** Why, for goodness sake?

**EDO:** Tina, you hardly know each other.

**TINA:** What do you mean 'hardly'? We've been going out together for three months now and we love each other deeply. We have never spoken a cross word to each other. And Mama would be happy about this. . . if she were alive. She would be happy with me. But you have been so suspicious of him from the very beginning.

#### **MOTHER'S FLAT**

**LOLA:** The last minute for what?

**BOKI:** The last minute for you to go to see a doctor.

**LOLA:** Never again! Never again, for as long as I live. They are madmen, sadists!

**BOKI:** I didn't mean that you should go to see your previous doctor. . . I found a new clinic on the Internet, not half an hour away from Zagreb. It's like a hotel, you will be comfortable there. Their methods are different from all those known until now, their patients can't praise them enough.

**LOLA:** It's out of the question! What's gotten into you? I am not an alcoholic, I only started drinking when your father died. I never even touched the stuff before then!

**BOKI:** It's hard, very hard, to get a place there. I used all the connections I have, the superintendent helped me. . . I personally rang the director of the clinic, you only have to say 'yes' and then you can start treatment next week.

**LOLA:** How could you make those arrangements for me behind my back, without my saying I would go. You didn't even ask me, you didn't even talk it over with me. I am your mother; you are not mine. In any case, even if I wanted to I couldn't go because of work. We are very busy at the moment, I can't just walk out on my clients and go away for a month's treatment.

## **FATHER'S FLAT**

**EDO:** You have to be cautious. In life, you must never just rush in. Especially when marriage is in question.

**TINA:** You policemen are always suspicious of everybody.

**EDO:** We policemen always check things out before doing anything.

**TINA:** What's the problem, Dad? Where's the problem? Filip is a successful businessman, he showers me with tenderness, he loves me, has a sense of humour, and, finally, something beautiful is happening in my life.

**EDO:** You don't know anything about that man.

**TINA:** How can you say that?

**EDO:** I'm sorry. . . I was suspicious of him from the start. . . I couldn't resist it. . . I rang a colleague in Rijeka a few days ago and asked some questions about who Filip really was.

**TINA:** How could you?

**EDO:** It's not all the same to me who my daughter spends time with.

**TINA:** So you ferreted around in his private life?

**EDO:** I ferreted around in his public life. And what I found out horrified me.

**TINA:** What are you talking about?

**EDO:** That advertising agency of his, it's just a front. He smuggles motor cars through that agency, and does work on the QT for a casino. He is a man with a police record. He made all that money in only five years and you can't do that honestly.

**TINA:** That can't be!

**EDO:** Oh yes it can. I have been getting ready to tell you for days. I didn't know how to without hurting you.

**TINA:** Well you can be sure that nothing you have ever done has hurt me more than this. I am twenty-three years old and you behave as if I were still a child. You know how much I love him and you have done your utmost to spoil everything - on purpose. I don't believe a word of it!

**EDO:** Sweetheart, I haven't done anything to spoil things for you on purpose. I would be only too happy if he were a decent, reliable person.

**TINA:** How could you dig around in our lives like that and investigate him and his business? You've always been like this - impossible and distrustful of everyone! I have had a belly-full

of you and your police! It's better to be under a delusion than to live like you – eternally mistrustful and suspicious! I hate you, I really hate you!

(Tina bursts into tears and rushes out of the flat.)

## **MOTHER'S FLAT**

**BOKI:** You know that it's just because of your job that you have to be admitted to that clinic.

**LOLA:** What are you trying to say?

**BOKI:** I know everything.

**LOLA:** What everything?

**BOKI:** I spoke with Maria.

**LOLA:** You spoke with Maria?

**BOKI:** Yes, I did! She rang you at home a few days ago and you weren't home so I answered and so. . . she told me everything.

**LOLA:** What did she tell you?

**BOKI:** That you had been given your last warning before dismissal. Your boss warned you that he could no longer tolerate your drunkenness. If you don't start therapy, you are going to lose your job.

**LOLA:** Blood cow! How could she say that?

**BOKI:** Don't be angry at her, I asked her about you.

**LOLA:** She shouldn't have betrayed me.

**BOKI:** She didn't betray you, she only wants to help you. All you have to do is want to help yourself and everything will be alright

**LOLA:** I simply don't have the strength to go through all that torture again.

**BOKI:** You will have to, Mama, you will have to. If you want me to be your son in the future, a son who is not ashamed of his mother, you will have to. . . I can't bear to watch you going downhill and I just won't be a part of it.

**LOLA:** Are you saying that you are prepared to give up your own mother?

**BOKI:** If you don't agree to undergo treatment, that's what I'm prepared to do.

(Lola bursts into tears.)

## Scene 9.

### C) COMPUTER MAN (The living room.)

(Franjo is in the living room and Vlado is standing in front of him with the computer under his arm.)

**FRANJO:** Well. . . did you fix it?

**VLADO:** Yes I did, it's working now.

**FRANJO:** Twice in one month. You have twice left me without my computer for five days! Don't you think I deserve some sort of apology.

**VLADO:** I am sorry.

**FRANJO:** You being sorry doesn't help me at all. I hope you have really fixed it this time.

**VLADO:** Yes, I have. This time, I won't even be charging for my time in coming here.

**FRANJO:** I wasn't intended to pay you anything anyway.

**VLADO:** I thought your wife would be home.

**FRANJO:** She walked out of me yesterday. The bitch! She's gone to her mother's. She's left me after four years of marriage. The ungrateful, inconsiderate bitch!

**VLADO:** You can't talk about her like that.

**FRANJO:** And why not? She doesn't care about me, why should I have to choose my words?

**VLADO:** She loves you.

**FRANJO:** You don't say! If she loved me she wouldn't have left me.

**VLADO:** She left you because this computer has become dearer to you than she is.

**FRANJO:** What do you know about it? Where do you get the right to speak about me and about us? You have no idea!

**VLADO:** I know everything.

**FRANJO:** About what?

**VLADO:** I know about the virtual sex you practise with people you have never even met. I know how you represent yourself falsely as a young widower, I know how you deceive women in your Internet chats. You have neglected your wife!

**FRANJO:** But this is scandalous! You have been spying on me! That's a criminal act. You will have to pay for this. A computer technician has to be like a confessor, and not like this – revealing the intimate secrets of his clients!

**VLADO:** I am a discreet person and I have told no-one about your “virtual life”. I'm only sorry that you are accusing the woman who loves you. Instead of blaming her for the break-up of your marriage, it would be better if you tried to get rid of your obsession.

**FRANJO:** To get rid of my obsession?

**VLADO:** And as soon as possible.

**FRANJO:** And in your mind my computer is my obsession.

**VLADO:** Of course. I have already seen it, you are not the only one with this problem.

**FRANJO:** But I don't want to get rid of it.

**VLADO:** Why not?

**FRANJO:** The loveliest moments in my life are the ones spent with the computer.

**VLADO:** That can't be right.

**FRANJO:** My computer means more to me than she does.

**VLADO:** Really?

**FRANJO:** Really! With a computer, everything is unsullied. Every contact and every relationship with every woman. . . it's like wearing gloves. In reality, everything becomes complicated. Reality is so repulsive and polluted. The screen disinfects everything.

**VLADO:** I live from computers, but I don't think like that. One gram of reality is worth more than all the virtual worlds put together. You must do something. Throw the computer out of the house, go and find your wife and beg for her forgiveness. Start life over.

(Silence.)

**FRANJO:** My wife appeals to you?

**VLADO:** What do you mean?

**FRANJO:** Do you find her attractive?

**VLADO:** Why are you asking me that?

**FRANJO:** I have noticed how you look at her.

**VLADO:** You're imagining things.

**FRANJO:** Why are you embarrassed to admit that you like her. Do you think she is ugly?

**VLADO:** No, she's beautiful.

**FRANJO:** You're unmarried? A bachelor?

**VLADO:** You've got that right.

**FRANJO:** Why's that?

**VLADO:** That's just the way it happened.

**FRANJO:** And you think that marriage is worth respecting?

**VLADO:** Yes, I do.

**FRANJO:** People always idealise what they don't know. Do you have a girlfriend?

**VLADO:** Not now. I live alone.

**FRANJO:** My wife is a free woman. I shall never make up with her.

**VLADO:** What are you trying to tell me?

**FRANJO:** If you like, I'll give you her address, her mother's address, that is.

**VLADO:** You are sick. Why did you ever get married in the first place when you are enough unto yourself?

**FRANJO:** We're all entitled to our mistakes. .

(Silence.)

**FRANJO:** And why haven't you ever married when you think that single people are incomplete, unfulfilled and unhappy?

**VLADO:** I just haven't met the right one. Not until now.

**FRANJO:** You're weak and you're a coward. You're afraid of women, and that's the only reason that you have remained alone.

**VLADO:** You are talking rubbish. You don't know me at all. You have no basis on which to draw any conclusions about me.

**FRANJO:** When I saw you for the first time, I could have sworn that you were a bachelor. Enclosed in your own world.

**VLADO:** I live a normal life.

**FRANJO:** Is it normal to be alone at your age while idealising marriage?

**VLADO:** That from the mouth of a man who practises virtual sex, hidden behind false names.

**FRANJO:** That's my choice. I live the way I want to; you live the way you have to.

**VLADO:** I didn't come here for you to insult me.

**FRANJO:** You like handing out advice to others, but you don't like seeing yourself as others see you. And you look pathetic.

**VLADO:** I only wanted to help. I didn't mean to offend you.

**FRANJO:** And I would like to help you.

**VLADO:** You are an egoist. You think only of yourself.

**FRANJO:** But she wasn't happy with me.

**VLADO:** I know.

**FRANJO:** She wanted a child. I did not agree. If she had had a child she would have loved me even less. As time passed, I had had enough. When she left, I felt an unbelievable feeling of relief. All I needed for complete happiness was my computer, and now that it has been repaired. . .

**VLADO:** You're a sick man.

**FRANJO:** Why? Because I'm open about it? I know what I want from life. From today onwards, I shall live the way that suits me. But you're the one who lives out of step with his dreams and his criteria. You idealise marriage but you live a single life. Isn't that enough reason for you to seek help from a therapist?

(Silence. Without saying a word of farewell, Vlado walks out of the flat. Franjo is alone for a time. Vlado comes back into the flat.)

**VLADO:** Give me her mother's address.

**FRANJO:** It won't do you any good.

**VLADO:** We'll see.

**FRANJO:** I'm the only one she loves. She won't even notice you, because you are invisible.

**VLADO:** If that's the way it is, why are you afraid to give me the address?

**FRANJO:** I'm not the least afraid.

## Scene 10.

### B) AT WORK (Four various spaces.)

(The action takes place in four undefined areas in such a way that the left-hand side is lit, and then the right-hand side, and with each other one of these sides representing a new area. We see Anna phoning on the left-hand side.)

**ANNA:** . . . Believe me, there's a lot of shit hitting the fan here – they are threatening sackings, I'm the only one who is watching your back. . . just to let you know on time. . . they are all talking against you, even my boss. . . But please, when they are deciding on whom to let go, don't forget that I have always been on your side. . . Why do you think that they won't be asking you, you're the GM's counsellor, for goodness sake.

(The light switches to the right-hand set where Alan and Ivo are talking.)

**ALAN:** Did they really say that?

**IVO:** Unfortunately, Boss, none of them respect you the way they should. Everyone thinks only of himself. I'm the only one you can rely on to the end.

**ALAN:** I know, Ivo, I know. What's important is that you always let me know on time about what they are saying.

**IVO:** I am the only one loyal to you without any holding back.

(The light moves back to the left-hand set and we now see Maria talking on her cell phone.)

**MARIA:** No, I've told you, a hundred times no! I am not prepared to plot against my colleagues, even if it means my dismissal. . . I have no intention of letting you know what anyone is saying about you. . . You can get as angry as you want, but I won't be anyone's spy . . . But I'm not interested in what is being said about me or who is saying it, I forgive all of them, the ones from the past and the ones from the future. . .

(We move to the right-hand set. We see Alan and Nera. They have just finished having sex. Both of them are out of breath.)

**NERA:** You're brilliant! Wonderful! So fiery, so passionate!

**ALAN:** Really?

**NERA:** Absolutely. A real man.

**ALAN:** Do you know what we call you in the company?

**NERA:** Which we?

**ALAN:** We in management.

**NERA:** What?

**ALAN:** Our success barometer.

**NERA:** Why?

**ALAN:** When you go to bed with someone from the firm, it means that he is highly ranked, that he had made it.

(Silence.)

**NERA:** You are talking nonsense. I only sleep with the men who appeal to me.

**ALAN:** And only the successful ones do. You said 'no' to me when I first joined the firm. We had it off the first time only a week after they had made me boss.

(In the left-hand set, we see Robert with his cell phone in his hand.)

**ROBERT:** Listen, it's a race against time, you play tennis with the general manager . . . alright then, from time to time. . . 'cos it's important. . . Please, when you meet the next time, let him know somehow by the way that you know me and what a great guy I am. . . tell him the firm can consider itself lucky to have me, tell him that you know me, that I am communicative and brilliant in every respect. . . Well is that so hard to say?. . . You know, just by the way, of course. . .

## **Scene 11.**

### **A) FAREWELL LETTER** (A greyish room.)

(Leo is before us. He is holding a piece of paper with a hand-written text on it. He reads the first sentence, but then goes on speaking the text by heart.)

**LEO:** My dear wife, my dear Buba, when you are reading this letter I shall no longer be alive. I want to tell you that this is not your fault. Do not blame yourself for what I have done. This way, it is better for me and for you. I can no longer stand being in this skin and being married to you. Our son has just graduated secondary school, our daughter got her degree two months ago, and this is the right moment for my departure. Although I have thought of suicide before, I did not want to do it while they were still children. Now that they are grown up, it will be easier for them to go through life without a depressed father. And it will be easier for you without me. I have not met your expectations from the early days of our marriage. I promised more than I was able to give. And only an ambitious and successful husband could make you happy, a husband you could be proud of and who made good money. I am sorry that I never became the man of your dreams. Forgive me for everything. There it is, I thought the simplest thing would be to take a revolver and shoot myself. That would have been easiest for me. But I know it would have been a shock for you to see my head blown to bits. That's why I decided on tablets. I shall take twenty tables and bring this unbearable suffering to an end. My dearest love, good-bye forever. I wish you every happiness in your life without me. I am going now to meet the liberation that I long for so much.

## **Scene 12.**

**B) POLICEMEN** (A park.)

(Tina is sitting on a park bench. Boki walks towards her. He is holding something behind his back in a large piece of white wrapping paper, but Tina cannot see it.)

**BOKI:** Hey!

**TINA:** Hey! So you're here again?

**BOKI:** Did you doubt I would be?

**TINA:** Just a little.

**BOKI:** Today is an important day.

(Boki takes a rose out of the white paper and hands it to Tina.)

**BOKI:** This is for you!

**TINA:** Ooh! What's this?

**BOKI:** A rose.

**TINA:** I can see it's a rose, but what have I done to deserve a rose from you?

**BOKI:** This is the anniversary.

**TINA:** What anniversary?

**BOKI:** It's exactly ten days from the day we first met.

**TINA:** Yes, but we are only acquaintances, friends in the best case. Is it usual to give friends roses?

**BOKI:** If they are as lovely as you, absolutely.

(Silence.)

**TINA:** I find all this a bit strange.

**BOKI:** What?

**TINA:** You happened along by chance ten days ago, saw me sitting on this bench and started chatting with me. Since then you have been coming here every day, as if we were both still in primary school. . . and without us ever agreeing on a date.

**BOKI:** But isn't that nice?

**TINA:** Nice perhaps, but confusing.

**BOKI:** You said 'no' to my invitations to go for coffee, or to the cinema. . .

**TINA:** Every other man would have given up.

**BOKI:** I hope I'm not bothering you?

**TINA:** Not at all. . . I have already gotten used to you. If you hadn't turned up today, it would have been. . . unexpected.

(Silence.)

**BOKI:** Perhaps I will suggest today that you come to my place for dinner this evening. I'm a good cook. I managed to buy fresh produce at the farmers' market this morning and I will cook up a real gastronomic surprise for you. Something special. That is, of course, if you accept.

**TINA:** Don't you live with your mother?

**BOKI:** Mama has gone away on a journey. She'll be away for a month.

**TINA:** Hmm. . . . We barely now each other. I'm not sure about dinner.

**BOKI:** Do you doubt my skills?

**TINA:** You are jumping over coffee and the cinema.

**BOKI:** You've already said 'no' to that.

**TINA:** If you didn't go any good with coffee and the cinema, surely there's even less hope for dinner.

**BOKI:** Do you want me to eat it all myself. I'll put on weight, and you'll be to blame.

(Silence.)

**TINA:** I broke up with a certain bloke three weeks ago. . .I'm not ready to start again. Not even just for company. . . except like this, in the park, like children. . . I don't have the strength for new disappointments.

**BOKI:** You think that I would disappoint you?

**TINA:** I didn't say that. . . I'm still on uneven ground. . . I'm sorry, but it would be best that you didn't waste time with me.

**BOKI:** What are you talking about, wasting time? I love being with you. I'm only sorry that I won't be able to convince you about my culinary skills this evening.

(A long silence.)

**TINA:** Listen!

**BOKI:** Tell me!

**TINA:** I'll accept your invitation to dinner if you promise me that we will treat the evening like having a coffee together, no strings attached. Just that and nothing more.

**BOKI:** Super! I promise to behave as if we are in a café having a casual coffee together.

**TINA:** I'm really interested to see how you electronic engineers do at cooking.

(They both get up from the bench.)

**BOKI:** Tina, I have to admit something to you. . . But you have to promise not to send me to the devil.

**TINA:** I never make promises ahead about anything. What's bothering you?

(Silence.)

**BOKI:** I'm not an electronic engineer.

**TINA:** But?

**BOKI:** I'm a police inspector. I know all about you. Your father told me two weeks ago that he was worried about you, that you were depressed because of your break-up with that

smuggler. He told me that you come regularly to this park. He knew my girlfriend dumped me last winter. He showed me your photograph. . . I can't lie to you any more. I'm so happy that you have agreed to come to dinner at my place. I am so pleased that we have been meeting these last few days. . . Last night, I couldn't stop thinking about you and fall asleep until three in the morning. That hasn't happened to me since secondary school.

(Silence.)

**TINA:** You know what? All you policemen are the same overbearing, disgusting manipulators! You and my father and that dinner can go to hell! I don't want to see you ever again.

(Tina slaps his face and turns towards the exit from the park.)

**BOKI:** Tina!

(Tina pauses.)

**TINA:** What is it?

**BOKI:** I have to admit another thing. Something really terrible.

**TINA:** And what's that?

**BOKI:** I haven't got a clue about cooking.

(Tina bursts out laughing. She returns to him and gently strokes the cheek she has just slapped. A moment later they kiss.)

**TINA:** I'm sorry. . . I'll come for dinner tonight. And, as a fine, you will cook to the best of your abilities. Did I slap you very hard?

**BOKI:** You pack a real punch like a policeman's daughter – powerful and precise.

(They kiss again.)

### **Scene 13.**

#### **C) SUMMER HOLIDAYS (The terrace.)**

(Boris is sweeping the terrace. Anita appears at the door carrying a holdall.)

**BORIS:** Where are you off to?

**ANITA:** To Zagreb.

**BORIS:** What's gotten into you, woman? It's the middle of the season and I can't look after the apartments alone.

**ANITA:** I shall go mad if I have to stay here even one more hour. I am going for ten days. I have asked Lucia to come to help you for two hours every day.

**BORIS:** Where will you sleep?

**ANITA:** At our daughter's bed-sit.

**BORIS:** You're out of your mind. She made up with her boyfriend last week and all she needs now is you.

**ANITA:** I'm sorry, but I can't stay here in this God-forsaken dump. I've had it up to here with tourists and local gossip. I miss Zagreb and normal conversation.

**BORIS:** Don't you talk with me every day about whatever you like?

**ANITA:** You have become worse than the locals. You have stopped reading, nothing interests you any more. You have given up on life, on everything.

**BORIS:** You are blaming me because I am happy living the life we both dreamt of for years.

**ANITA:** I knew you wouldn't even try to understand me.

**BORIS:** You know what, Anita – the problem is not in this small place, or the work we do, or me. . . You are the problem, only you.

**ANITA:** Perhaps. I'm off.

**BORIS:** Please don't go!

**ANITA:** I have to.

(Anita exits closing the door behind her. Boris angrily throws down the broom and then kicks it with his foot.)

**BORIS:** Bloody menopause! Why doesn't she enrol in a course like all normal women when they are going through a crisis!

## Scene 14.

### D) COMPUTER MAN (A café.)

(Franjo is in the café and Ranka arrives.)

**FRANJO:** Hey!

**RANKA:** Hey! Why did you want us to meet?

**FRANJO:** I heard that you are marrying my “computer man”.

**RANKA:** His name is Vlado.

**FRANJO:** I know his name is Vlado, but as far as I am concerned he is an ordinary, boring “computer man”.

**RANKA:** He’s not at all boring. He’s witty, educated and sweet. He gives me his time, his love and his attention. Everything that I did not get from you. Did you call me to talk about him?

**FRANJO:** No. I wanted to talk about us. About you and me.

**RANKA:** You and I are a chewed-up story that ended long ago. There is nothing more to say about us. Good-bye then.

**FRANJO:** Wait! Please, just a moment. Don’t rush into things with that wedding. I want you to know that I have been thinking about you, about us, these last few months. We have to try again. I miss you. The way I am living now is not a real life. You and I . . . if we try, we can make it.

**RANKA:** You were only any good as a husband for the first two weeks, and then everything was horrible. You didn’t even want a child.

**FRANJO:** Give me another chance. I’m even prepared for a child, just so that you become my wife again.

**RANKA:** Why would you need me? You have your virtual mistresses, let them have a baby for you.

**FRANJO:** That blabber-mouth “computer man” – he told you about that?

**RANKA:** I knew even before he told me. Sorry, sweetheart, but virtual sex wouldn’t satisfy me.

**FRANJO:** Let's talk things over calmly. I can't accept that this is the end between us.

**RANKA:** You'll just have to. Intelligent people know when something is over and don't keep on insisting.

(Silence.)

**FRANJO:** He would never have won you over if I hadn't given him your mother's address. I "set him" up for you. I didn't want you to be alone. I made a mistake – I admit it. Now I want to fix things.

**RANKA:** You are talking nonsense. I have liked him since I first met him. When I moved out, I rang Directory Information and found the number of his company. I invited him for coffee. He agreed immediately.

**FRANJO:** That's impossible!

**RANKA:** It's very possible. I chose him. Why shouldn't women be the ones who do the choosing. And, believe me – I was not mistaken.

(Silence.)

**FRANJO:** When did that happen?

**RANKA:** What?

**FRANJO:** When did you call him the first time?

**RANKA:** The fifth day after I moved to Mama's flat. . . I was so lonely after breaking up with you, I even doubted whether my decision had been the right one. I thought that you would phone me and suggest that we make up. On the fifth day, I realised that I was constantly thinking about your "computer man". I phoned him – and he immediately agreed that we meet. We started keeping company. Every day. After a week, I went to bed with him. He was wonderful. . . It was on the following day that I rang you and suggested a peaceful divorce. You grabbed at the chance. . . so we went ahead. I really don't know why we are wasting time here.

(Silence.)

**FRANJO:** You're not right for each other.

**RANKA:** Just you think that, if it makes you feel better. . . Good-bye then!

**FRANJO:** May I at least ring you sometimes?

**RANKA:** Don't! Half an hour ago, I coded my cell to reject all calls from you if there were any.

**FRANJO:** Do you hate me?

**RANKA:** Not any more. . . When I think of you, I have a feeling of repulsion and disgust, but it's not hatred any more. I have to go.

**FRANJO:** Good-bye!

**RANKA:** Good-bye!

### Scene 15.

**C) AT WORK** (The office.)

(Anna, Nera, Robert, Ivo and Maria are sitting at their desks in the office. There is a prolonged silence, they are all engrossed in their papers. The phone rings and Anna lifts the receiver.)

**ANNA:** Hello. . . yes, she's here. . . Alright, I'll tell her.

(Anna puts down the receiver.)

**ANNA:** Maria, they want you to go immediately to the general manager's office.

**MARIA:** The GM's office?

**ANNA:** It's urgent.

**IVO:** What could it be?

**MARIA:** I have never been to his office.

**IVO:** I have been there only once, when I messed up with that equipment import. I don't even like to think of it.

**ROBERT:** Hurry up! He does not forgive anyone being late. It will probably all be alright.

(Maria stands up from her desk and reluctantly leaves the office.)

**NERA:** So that's it – she has been selected.

**ROBERT:** Selected for what?

**NERA:** To get the "heave-ho".

**ROBERT:** You think so?

**NERA:** No doubt about it. You know that he always gives the sack in person. They say he enjoys it.

**IVO:** That means that we're saved.

**NERA:** Probably. Just so long as she doesn't take any of us down with her.

**IVO:** Come on, Maria is not like that.

**NERA:** People who are drowning often drag down the people who are nearest to them.

**IVO:** I have never run foul of her, ever. But, I must be frank – this is fair. That she goes, and we stay.

**ROBERT:** She's always been so inadaptable.

**ANNA:** The firm came last as far as she was concerned, and her family was always first..

**NERA:** All those people who extol their families at any opportunity they get have always got on my nerves. If she decided to be the mother of two children, a wife and a housewife, she obviously couldn't devote enough time to her career, the way the rest of us could.

(Alan comes into the office looking as if all his ships have sunk.)

**IVO:** Is it true about Maria?

**ALAN:** Yes, it's true. The GM only told me this morning.

**IVO:** Boss, she has always definitely been worse at everything that the rest of us.

**NERA:** She has never had a feeling for working with people. For subtle communication. She has always been far too direct.

**ALAN:** Yes, I always thought that, too. But now she taking over my position.

**NERA:** She is?

**ALAN:** Don't you know?

**NERA:** Know what?

**ALAN:** She's going to be your new boss. And they have given me the sack.

**ROBERT:** She is! . . . Well, yes. . . despite everything. . . her results have always been good . . . she's a great worker.

**ALAN:** The GM is a swine. He asked me for a name, the name of whoever should be let go. When I uttered Maria's name, he said in front of everybody in the Management Board: "All your decisions until now have been wrong. That's why I decided that I would give the position of the chief of your sector to the person you wanted to get rid of." And he kicked me

out. I have to leave the office in three days time. I am paying off a loan on the flat and the car. My wife does not work. I don't know what I'm going to do.

**NERA:** That's terrible.

**IVO:** I am so sorry.

(Maria comes into the office.)

**NERA:** Congratulations, Maria, on your appointment, I really am glad.

**IVO:** My heartfelt congratulations.

**ANNA:** Bravo, you deserve it.

**ROBERT:** I am really pleased for you.

**MARIA:** This has really surprised me.

**NERA:** But still, you have always shown the best results.

**ROBERT:** You have always given your all.

**IVO:** To be frank, this sector has been sinking into a crisis since Alan took over. I'm sorry, Alan, but that's a fact.

**ANNA:** It's logical to me, too, that Alan has to leave. He could have taken us all down.

**NERA:** We all thought that this could happen, Alan.

**ROBERT:** Your leaving will be a relief for our sector and for the firm.

**IVO:** Alan has messed up a long of things and it's logical that he should leave.

**MARIA:** But Alan won't be leaving.

**ALAN:** How won't I be leaving?

**MARIA:** When the general manager suggested that I take over your position, I asked what he was planning with you. He said that he had sacked you, but I said that I would take over this office under the condition that you stayed on working here. I can't forget that it was you who gave me my job here. I promised the GM that we would increase sales not by twenty, but by thirty percent. But only on condition that you remained part of our team.

**ALAN:** Really?

**MARIA:** He agreed. We have a three-month trial period. We will all have to give our maximum so that no-one loses their job.

**ALAN:** Thank God! Thank you, Maria, from the bottom of my heart. I have not been so well-intended towards you.

**MARIA:** I know, but I don't hold it against you. What's important is that you keep your job and continue working in a friendly atmosphere surrounded by people you know.

**ALAN:** Yes, that is real, authentic happiness.

**ROBERT:** Maria, your first decision as Boss is brilliant. I'm really happy for Alan's sake.

**IVO:** So am I. That's really wonderful.

## Scene 16.

### B) FAREWELL LETTER

(Leo is curled up in the foetus position on his hospital bed. He is wearing hospital pyjamas. He is staring at the wall, his face expressionless. The door opens and his wife Buba walks into the room.)

**BUBA:** How are you?

(Leo does not react and does not answer.)

**BUBA:** I barely managed to talk the doctor into letting me see you. I don't know what you have told him about me, but he tried to convince me that I would upset you, that it would not be a good thing for me to visit you. He doesn't even want the children to come to see you. What an idiot! That psychiatrist of yours acts as if he knows you better than I do. As though you prefer to talk to him, who has known you for only three days, than with the wife with whom you have spent twenty-three years. Psychiatrists are arrogant ego-maniacs. It was only when I threatened to send all the papers a letter saying that he would not allow me to visit my lawful husband, that he gave in.

(Silence.)

**BUBA:** How could you do this to us? If you had succeeded. . . in what you tried to do, you would have shamed me and your son and your daughter. You are selfish and thoughtless. You almost ruined all our futures. Problems can't be solved with tablets. What were you thinking of? Other people go through hard times, but they don't look for a way out in suicide.

As if I am satisfied with my life – but I don't complain and I just keep on working. . . and I don't tell anyone how I feel. That farewell letter of yours – that was really too much! The inspector made me explain our whole life to him, and questioned me about whether I had a lover and if I had overspent on my credit cards. And all sorts of nonsense like that. You put me in an incomparably uncomfortable situation. I have to be ashamed and justify myself because of your thoughtless behaviour. I have more work than I can handle in the office, and I can't concentrate on anything at all. . . What did you hope to achieve with all this? Did you want to give me a guilt complex? To accuse me because of your own dissatisfaction? Because of your own laziness, your lack of ambition or any desire for social and business advancement? It would have been better if you had thought of me, of our children, our relatives and our friends

. . . Just so that you know – they have been talking about this all over town. Everyone now knows what's going on with you. The neighbours are looking at me as though I am a witch. Your mother gave me a lecture on how I must have understanding for your weaknesses. And who is going to have understanding for me and my problems, for my shame? Why are you silent? Say something!

(Leo pretends to have heard nothing.)

**BUBA:** There, you see, that's you. That's the way you've always been – shut into your own world, with no interest in my feelings, or the people closest to you.

(Leo still does not respond.)

**BUBA:** Are you aware of how much you are irritating me now with your silence? Hasn't it been enough that you tried to do something like this? And even there you showed how stupid and incompetent you are. . . Surely now, after everything, I deserve your apology, your "I'm sorry" and your promise that nothing like this will ever occur again? You idiot, you stupid, thoughtless, unfeeling man!

(Leo gets up from his bed, goes over to Buba, gently strokes her face, kisses her cheek, and then, unexpectedly, he squeezes both hands around her neck and starts to strangle her. Buba tries to get free of his grip, she thrashes around on all sides, but he is very much stronger than she is. After a time, Buba's body arches into a strong spasm, and then droops lifelessly. Buba is dead. Leo lowers her body to the floor, and then goes back to his bed and again curls

up in the foetus position like a small child, and he is singing a children's song: "The Little Rabbit and the Brook".)

**LEO:** And he searches and he searches, that little rabbit, looking everywhere for the brook. Where has it disappeared to, he'd find it if he could. . . "

### Scene 17.

#### D) SUMMER HOLIDAYS (The terrace.)

(Boris is setting the tables for breakfast. After the plates, he put bread baskets on the tables. He puts a tea-pot holding hot water on each table. Anita appears at the door, carrying a holdall. Boris notices her, but says nothing and continues setting the breakfast tables. After a long silence, he speaks.)

**BORIS:** You're back quickly.

**ANITA:** As you can see.

**BORIS:** After only half a day and one evening, Zagreb was too boring.

(Silence.)

**BORIS:** What happened?

**ANITA:** Ahh. . . I forgot that it was summertime, and that everyone has gone away to the seaside. Whomever I rang, no-one was home. I wanted to go to watch one of those plays in the open, at Opatovina, but they cancelled because of rain.

**BORIS:** What about our daughter – did you at least manage to have a good talk with her?

**ANITA:** You can just imagine. She was angry that I had arrived without telling her in advance. After five minutes, she said she was going to her boyfriend's, that I got on her nerves. I twisted and turned in bed until four in the morning, I couldn't fall asleep. And then I sat in the car and drove here.

(Silence.)

**BORIS:** And, what now?

**ANITA:** Nothing. I'm tired from driving. I'm going to have a shower and then I'll give you a hand.

**BORIS:** You get some rest. You have a day off today. I'll manage everything. . .

**ANITA:** Look, I'm sorry. I have been a little bit nervy lately.

**BORIS:** Everyone is entitled to a bad week. But only to one week a year.

(Anita smiles and hugs him.)

**ANITA:** I know that I have been a drag lately.

**BORIS:** I'm not that much better.

**ANITA:** You at least enjoy all this.

**BORIS:** I'd like to admit something – I'm just a good actor.

**ANITA:** What if we change things?

**BORIS:** Come on, what's gotten into you – we did change our life fundamentally and look how that turned out. We are too old to do that again.

**ANITA:** You think so?

**BORIS:** Yes, I do.

**ANITA:** And what do you suggest?

**BORIS:** That we give up. The happiest folk are the ones who give up in good time and don't regret anything.

**ANITA:** How very comforting.

**BORIS:** You will feel better after you have a shower and a nap.

**ANITA:** You could be right.

**BORIS:** I am giving you the day off today. You can behave like our tourists.

**ANITA:** In that case, Sir, please bring this bag and prepare to massage my back, because I am all stiff from driving.

**BORIS:** My pleasure, Madame.

(Boris picks up the holdall and the two of them leave the terrace. After a few moments, Damir comes out of his apartment. He sits at a table and starts spreading butter on his bread-roll. Petra also comes out onto the terrace. She sits at his table, and also starts buttering her bread-roll. The silence between them is prolonged.)

**DAMIR:** It's just not right.

**PETRA:** What isn't right?

**DAMIR:** Coming home at three in the morning. You spent a whole five hours at that male stripper show.

**PETRA:** Believe me, I wanted to come home earlier, but I could not leave her there alone.

**DAMIR:** Why not?

**PETRA:** She had too much to drink. . . One of the strippers started to make a play for her.

**DAMIR:** And how did she react?

**PETRA:** She started flirting with him.

**DAMIR:** The whore!

**PETRA:** You know that their marriage has fallen apart. She is desperate.

**DAMIR:** Desperate? Desperate women don't get drunk in some filthy dive. Did she come back with you?

**PETRA:** No, she didn't.

**DAMIR:** Aha – so there was probably sex, too?

**PETRA:** No, I don't believe that.

**DAMIR:** Did she kiss the stripper?

**PETRA:** Well. . .

**DAMIR:** Did she or didn't she?

**PETRA:** Well, yes, but just a little.

**DAMIR:** What a stupid answer? As soon as a married woman kisses an unknown man only once, that is proof that she's a whore. She has two children and she has to think about what she is doing because of them. You can't say she kissed him "just a little" or had "just a little sex" with him, or that she "cheated on her husband just a little". She either did or she didn't.

**PETRA:** I told you what she's been going through.

**DAMIR:** So you are justifying her behaviour?

**PETRA:** No, I'm not, but. . . Why are you talking to me in that tone?

**DAMIR:** Because you were with her until three in the morning. With that cow and those horny colts. My future wife – shame on you. . . disgusting. Just imagine if some of our friends had seen you.

**PETRA:** But she has gone through such a. . .

**DAMIR:** She doesn't interest me at all! But you – you interest me! But you - when you become my wife, you should know that I shall not tolerate such behaviour. Never! And you better remember it!

**PETRA:** What behaviour? It was only a show.

**DAMIR:** It wasn't a show, it was a visit to a whore-house that you obviously enjoyed.

**PETRA:** Damir, what's wrong with you?

**DAMIR:** That was the first and the last time – ever!

**PETRA:** Please stop talking to me in that way! I do not allow you such a tone.

**DAMIR:** If you want to be my wife, then you'll have to get used to my tone and you must never shame me in this way again. Never! I am expecting you to apologise, of course, and not that you respond to my every word with such impertinence!

**PETRA:** You are expecting an apology?

**DAMIR:** Of course! And an apology right this minute.

**PETRA:** You know what, dear Damir?

**DAMIR:** Tell me.

**PETRA:** The wedding is off! I am going home and I don't want to see you ever again.

(Petra takes the ring off her finger and places it on the table in front of Damir.)

**DAMIR:** Just a minute, you can't just. . . first, let me. . .

**PETRA:** And leave me in peace while I pack my things.

**DAMIR:** But I am the one who is entitled to be angry, and not you.

(Petra has stopped listening to him and angrily exits through the door that leads to the right-hand apartment. Damir takes the ring from the table and follows her. The terrace is deserted. Soon after, Drago comes out of the left-hand apartment, still wearing his pyjamas. He takes a deep breath, yawns, stretches and sits down at his table. He takes some bread and starts buttering it. Ena comes in through the main door. She is dishevelled. She is holding her head with one hand as if she is suffering from two migraine headaches.)

**DRAGO:** Where have you been all night?

**ENA:** What the bloody hell do you care!

**DRAGO:** What are you doing with yourself?

**ENA:** I am not planning to do any explaining to you.

**DRAGO:** You know you can't stand alcohol. Have you been vomiting?

**ENA:** Yes, I have. But what of it?

(Silence.)

**DRAGO:** And. . . was it a good f—ck?

**ENA:** Yes, it was.

**DRAGO:** What's his name?

**ENA:** I have no idea. They have just left. They are performing at Hvar tomorrow.

**DRAGO:** You are disgusting and pathetic! Do you think you have had your revenge now?

**ENA:** As a matter of fact, I do.

(Silence. Drago stands up and kicks our angrily at his chair.)

**DRAGO:** You insolent cow! I didn't sleep a wink all night worrying that something had happened to you, while you're having it off with a man whose name you don't even know!

**ENA:** And what was the name of your whore in Rotterdam: Suzy, Natasha, Erika?

**DRAGO:** It's not the same thing.

**ENA:** Oh yes it is. It hurts just the same, you damned asshole. There's no difference in that between a man and a woman.

**DRAGO:** You bitch, how could you do something like this to me, how could you?

(Drago starts crying and falls to his knees. He sobs louder and louder. He manages to control his weeping after some time has passed.)

**DRAGO:** I have loved you. . . I have never loved anyone the way I loved you. No-one. You can't even imagine how much I care about you.

(He starts crying again. He sobs choke him. Ena draws near to him and strokes his head. At that, his feelings show themselves even more strongly. His sobbing grows louder, and then, after a moment, he tries to control his despair. Ena holds him close. He now cries quietly in her arms.)

**ENA:** Forgive me.

(Silence. Drago stops crying, moves away from her and brushes away his tears with his hand.)

**DRAGO:** I don't want to lose you. Please forgive me for what I did, I beg you.

(Ena kisses him gently, and he kisses her back. They start to kiss more passionately. Suddenly the door to the right-hand apartment opens and Petra appears in the doorway, carrying her holdall.)

**PETRA:** Sorry!

(Drago and Ena pull away from each other.)

**ENA:** Where are you going?

**PETRA:** Home.

(Damir appears at the door.)

**DAMIR:** Please, think it over just once more!

**PETRA:** It's over, man, it's over forever! And don't chase after me or I shall call the police!

Good-bye everyone.

(Petra exits through the main door. Damir sits down dejectedly.)

**DRAGO:** I'm really sorry.

**ENA:** So am I.

**DAMIR:** You can f--k off with your sympathy! It was because of you two that she left me!

(Silence.)

**DRAGO:** You should never blame others. If you really love each other – you will make up.

If you don't – then it's better that you each go your separate ways.

**DAMIR:** You know where you can shove your advice!

(Damir stands up, goes to the right-hand apartment and angrily slams the door.)

**ENA:** It's better that it finished like this. They are not mature enough for marriage.

**DRAGO:** You're quite right. They are both so rigid. They don't know how to forgive.

**- THE END -**