

**Miro Gavran**

# **HOW TO KILL THE PRESIDENT**

(a drama)  
(fourth, final version)

**Note:**

The first version of this drama was published in Slovakian  
In May 2003 in the author's book  
*Dramas and Comedies II* in the *Editions of Jan Jankovič*,  
Bratislava, Slovakia

The second version of this drama was published in  
Croatian in September 2003 in the journal *Kazalište* No. 13/14  
in Zagreb, in the the edition Croatian Centre of ITI – UNESCO, Zagreb

The third version of this drama emerged in September 2003 during a rehearsal for a  
first broadcasting on Croatian Radio.

The fourth version of this drama emerged at the rehearsals for a theatre premiere,  
scheduled for 6th March 2004 at the Theatre &TD.

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**Theatre premiere: Teatar & TD, Zagreb, 6th March 2000**

**Production: Zoran Mužić**

**Stage design: Aleksandar Bezinović**

**Costume design: Đurđa Janeš**

**Music: Mate Matišić**

**Lighting direction: Damir Kruhak**

**Sound direction: Branko Vodeničar**

**Stage manager: Petra Budiša**

**Roles:**

**Robert: Marko Torjanac**

**Igor: Luka Dragić**

**Stella: Mladena Gavran**

**Maria: Natalija Đorđević**

**Characters:**

**Robert . . . . . 45 years old**

**Igor . . . . . 31 years old**

**Stella . . . . . 45 years old**

**Maria . . . . . 30 years old**

**Note:**

**The plot takes place in a transitional European country at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

Scene 1

(Robert, Stella)

*(Stella is placing photographs in a large album. Robert appears at the door. He has a framed picture under his arm, 1m by 60 cm in size, wrapped in white paper.)*

ROBERT: Good evening.

STELLA: Hi!

ROBERT: What are you doing?

STELLA: I'm arranging pictures of the kids. We haven't put a single film into the album in the last six months. We have just been rushing around and working. How was it?

ROBERT: Excellent. She was brilliant.

STELLA: Of course she was. You wrote half of her Master's thesis for her.

ROBERT: It wasn't really like that. I only advised her.

STELLA: Oh, come on, when somebody does twelve versions of a Master's thesis, it cannot be concluded that she has a clear vision from the beginning about what she wants to say.

ROBERT: The important thing is that the final version is right. It is completely irrelevant whether it materialises through two or through twelve versions. This is truly Anna's work; I was only an advisor and nothing more.

STELLA: What's that?

ROBERT: A present. A picture.

STELLA: Anna's present?

ROBERT: Yes, Anna's present.

STELLA: Unpack it then.

*(Robert takes the paper off the picture. A modern abstract picture is revealed before us. Oil on canvas.)*

STELLA: I don't like it.

ROBERT: Why not? It's beautiful.

STELLA: Old hat. It's awful the number of painters that plagiarise one another.

ROBERT: It seems to me that it has something of its own, something different, and something specific.

STELLA: Oh, come on. She could have given you a nicer present.

ROBERT: There is no present nicer than a picture.

STELLA: I agree, given the picture is nice.

*(Robert lays the picture aside.)*

ROBERT: How are the kids?

STELLA: So-so. They hardly got to sleep. They were both coughing for a long, long time. I needed an hour to get them off. I gave them cough medicine and all that, but... this damp, this old flat, this city... the fog, the smog... I am afraid that our children will end up with asthma in a year or two if we don't do anything.

ROBERT: You're exaggerating.

STELLA: Not in the slightest. Look – every so often it's the same old story of the bronchitis. Do you ever listen even for a moment to how they breathe?

ROBERT: What can we do?

STELLA: It would be best to buy a house outside the city, move from the smog and the bad air.

ROBERT: Come on, Stella, don't fantasise, you know we'll never have that kind of money.

STELLA: Ah, if we were in the West, if we did the same jobs there as we do here, we would have a house and a swimming pool and a better car.

ROBERT: We are where we are, and we have a better life than ninety percent of the population of this country. We ought not to be dissatisfied.

STELLA: Because we work like dogs, because we are successful and capable, and yet – all of this is nothing. Do you know that our dear domestic help asked for a rise yesterday?

ROBERT: You don't say! How much does she want?

STELLA: Twenty percent.

ROBERT: Try and get her to agree to be satisfied with ten percent

STELLA: I shall try.

*(Silence.)*

STELLA: Listen, I was thinking about sending the children to my parents' for a while. For the fresh air, to clean out their lungs.

ROBERT: I agree; it's just that they are so attached to us that I'm afraid they won't want to stay at their place.

STELLA: We should all go there together for a weekend, and only on the third day leave them with their Grandma and Granddad, so that they would get used to one another. This would be good for their health, and we could devote ourselves to our work in peace for a while.

ROBERT: It's worth a try.

*(Stella approaches the picture from the other side, and observes the back.)*

STELLA: Oho, there is something written here: "For my dear, charming and selfless supervisor, as a token of gratitude for all that he has done for me, his eternal debtor, Anna." She is thanking you a lot, have you not done a little bit too much for her?

ROBERT: Oh, come on, Stella.

STELLA: She's been known to phone you twice a day in the last few months.

ROBERT: Well, I'm her supervisor.

STELLA: "Dear, charming and selfless."

ROBERT: Oh, Stella, don't be ironic.

STELLA: I hope that she will leave you in peace a little now. That she won't phone you as much as she has done up until now.

ROBERT: You really have no reason to be jealous.

STELLA: I hope not. I would cut off your head if I had a reason to be jealous.

ROBERT: Please, don't behave like a police investigator.

STELLA: And don't you give me motives and I won't investigate you. How many of you were there at the dinner?

ROBERT: About ten or twelve.

STELLA: Where did she take you?

ROBERT: To that restaurant where we celebrated your birthday.

STELLA: It really gets on my nerves that that little miss took you to my restaurant.

ROBERT: Oh, stop it. How could she have known that the two of us visit there?

Scene 2

(Robert, Stella)

*(Robert is sitting at the table reading a book. Stella arrives at the door.)*

ROBERT: Hi!

STELLA: Hi!

ROBERT: What's it like outside?

STELLA: Disgusting. Cold. Rain, slush. As if the heavens had opened. You're lucky that you didn't go into town today.

ROBERT: And at work?

STELLA: As usual... we've got two new patients. And you, have you used today for your report?

ROBERT: Yes and no ...after breakfast I started working earnestly, and then I switched on the computer and ... an e-mail arrived after which I could no longer concentrate on writing.

STELLA: Surely an ordinary e-mail didn't fray your nerves that much? It's not bad news, is it?

ROBERT: On the contrary. It's good news. My brother wrote to me.

STELLA: Igor?!

ROBERT: He is coming to visit us tomorrow.

STELLA: From Mexico?

ROBERT: I have to go and pick him up at the airport. The day after tomorrow it is exactly twenty years since the death of our father, he wants us to go to the cemetery together.

STELLA: He's really coming?

ROBERT: Tomorrow at ten-thirty in the morning. Via Frankfurt. He has not been here for nine years, and now all of a sudden...

STELLA: And his fiancée?

ROBERT: She's coming too, but three days after him.

STELLA: I'll have to tell the woman to prepare the spare room... I presume that they will be sleeping here. Both of them.

ROBERT: I should think so.

STELLA: How long do they intend to stay?

ROBERT: Two weeks.

STELLA: Well, quite long. It's a real shame that I have so much work in the hospital.

ROBERT: He has been gone for nine years. Nine long years.

STELLA: I shall finally meet your little brother... Listen, the two of you didn't fall out, did you, when he went away to his post-grad in Washington?

ROBERT: We truly didn't. You've already asked me that so many times.

STELLA: It's a little strange to me.

ROBERT: And you think that it is not strange to me that he hasn't been here for nine years? I have written to him so many times asking for him to come at least for a week or two. I was even prepared to pay his ticket. Before, when he was still on his post-grad. And only now, and suddenly. It's a pity that the kids went off to your parents' yesterday. I would like him to see them, and for them to meet their uncle.

STELLA: If he had announced his arrival earlier, we could have organised everything differently ... He could have sent that e-mail earlier.

ROBERT: What's done is done.

Scene 3

(Robert, Stella, Igor)

ROBERT: They are so vivacious, so cheerful; when they are at home, our house is full. They will turn six in three months' time. They start school in the autumn. Here, this is their last picture; from last month... we were in the park...

*(Igor takes the photograph)*

IGOR: They are both sweet: both Peter and Olga. It must be tiring having twins?

STELLA: You can imagine. Robert and I did not become parents until we were thirty-nine. We entered our mature years without children, accustomed to the single life, and then suddenly – two children, marriage, nappies, and madness. He soon became manager of the Institute for Sociological Research, and I became manager of the psychiatric hospital... you can imagine what our lives turned into.

ROBERT: I am glad that you've come, to see you, to talk to you.

IGOR: And I'm not half glad. I am happy to have met Stella, I am happy that I can finally chat to you about everything, like before. When our Dad died, Robert was my brother and father and guardian.

ROBERT: You were barely eleven years old.

IGOR: He was a good brother, he taught me everything. And I thank him most for having taught me to observe this world and think with my own head. Dad taught you to understand the world, he taught you to hate socialism and all the lies on which it is built, and after that you taught me what is good and what is bad. You taught me to hate the lies of false society. I was proud of your articles, which you published in the newspapers. You went to the uttermost limits in your criticism ... as much as was possible at that time. The pro-regime journalists attacked you and disputed you, but everybody in the country knew that you represented what was new, sensible people saw that socialism was caving in, but only the most courageous like you dared to write this with valid arguments...

ROBERT: Well, all that is the distant past. So much has changed since then. We have all passed through so many delusions...

IGOR: Tomorrow it is exactly twenty years since Dad's death... Imagine if he were alive, how he would look at all that our country has gone through from the fall of Communism until today.

ROBERT: He would be happy.

IGOR: I think that he would be disappointed. Don't forget that he was one of those who believed that everything would thrive after the fall of socialism, that the West would offer us a helping hand, and all such nonsense. If he saw our rifled country, rifled by national politicians and thieves, rifled by foreigners who gathered up anything of worth for petty money... he would have had enough of the torture of his life...

STELLA: It is always difficult and ungrateful to say 'What would have been if it had been...' It is better to turn to the nicer things in life, look to the future with love, and find a foothold for optimism... only this can bring happiness to our lives.

ROBERT: Stella is right... She looks at life positively; she is after all a great worker, a woman of enormous energy. You know about all that she has done in the psychiatric hospital – she has detected a new kind of psychosis. She has established a new kind of patient that has appeared. She has founded a department for them. They are already working with her methods abroad. I think she does most for this new kind of patient that has appeared – desperate, wretched people who are victims of these very transitional times. We got people who went mad at the mere thought of eating genetically modified food, people who lament the quickly passed socialist times and who do not wish to accept the new reality, we got psychiatric patients depressed at the processes which are occurring in world politics. Just imagine – there are two patients who have gone mad at the thought of globalisation, because of the domination of powerful countries over economically weaker countries...

STELLA: People simply find it difficult to accept this new reality, which demands the adoption of the lifestyle characteristic of Western countries. Once, in socialism, workers and their places of work were protected. They did not have to think about paying taxes and about whether their salary would come the following month. Many people have gone mad with uncertainty in this new time.

ROBERT: Would you like a drink?

IGOR: No, thanks.

*(Silence.)*

STELLA: I am glad that we are finally going to meet your fiancée.

IGOR: And I can't wait to see her either.

STELLA: She must have borne what happened to her parents with great difficulty.

IGOR: It is not even two-and a-half months since then... when the police rang me and said that she had to come and identify her parents, that they had been killed in a car that had skidded off the road... When I realised that I would have to tell her this... Anyway, when I told her this, when the funeral and everything that goes with a funeral passed, I was horrified at the realisation of how deep the depression was into which she had fallen... Nothing truly interested her... I didn't know how to motivate her for life... it seemed as if she would never again find a motive, a sense in anything. And then she got a phone call from her aunt in Italy, who lives as a nun not far from Naples... Moreover, Maria is not a believer. I won't say that she is an atheist, but I know positively that she is not a believer... And when her aunt invited her to come and stay with her so that they could spend some time together, I was sure that she would refuse... However instead of this, Maria packed her things the very next day, and set out for Italy... There, she stayed for two whole months... it was obvious that she needed this. When we spoke on the telephone last week, while we arranged that she would come here, and that after spending some time in my native city, we would fly back to Mexico together, she sounded calm...

Scene 4

(Robert, Igor, later Stella)

*(Robert and Igor come into the living room. They take off their coats.)*

ROBERT: So many memories, so many emotions. Whenever I go to the graveyard, I am under such an impression that I look differently at my life for at least two days afterwards.

IGOR: The grave is a little out of repair.

ROBERT: Well, I already thought this... however I shall sort it out... I have been in such a rush in the last few months. It is as if my life is taking place between two symposiums.

IGOR: Listen, I shall give half of the money to tidy it up, just let us arrange it...

ROBERT: It's not a question of money, but time, you see. I'm sorry that it is the way it is... If I had known that you were coming, I would have tidied up the grave... I have really been in a delirium in the past months. Would you like a drink?

IGOR: Gladly. If you have that herb brandy from yesterday.

ROBERT: I have, I have. My father-in-law makes it.

*(Robert takes a bottle and two glasses from the cupboard and pours it for himself and Igor.)*

ROBERT: Here you are.

IGOR: Thanks.

ROBERT: To your health and your future.

IGOR: To your health and happiness.

*(They both drink from the glasses.)*

IGOR: It's excellent.

ROBERT: My father-in-law discovered the recipe, how to prepare it... there are eight different herbs in it...

IGOR: I don't usually drink any strong drink, just wine... but this herb brandy is really...

*(Silence.)*

ROBERT: I remember how hard Father's death hit you. Ten years earlier, when our mother died, I also felt this devastation and emptiness. I too felt that everything was against me, that my whole life had been transformed into an unbearable sorrow overnight.

IGOR: I don't even remember Mother. Father was everything for me... and then suddenly...

ROBERT: That year in gaol broke him. They were obviously not kind to him. He never spoke about it, but without a doubt they were three times as cruel to him, a political prisoner, and 'enemy of socialism', than they were to ordinary thieves. It is better not to think about all this any longer, not to dig at old wounds. You know... since you've come, I've still not got round to asking you the most important thing...

IGOR: Tell me!

ROBERT: Why in the hell have you not been in this country, in this house, at that graveyard for nine years? Have I done something wrong, please, tell me, answer me... I am confused...

*(Long silence.)*

IGOR: I missed you. I missed you very much... I wanted so many times to speak to you. I too, like every being in this world, have so many times doubted myself, what I should do... and in such situations I would always think of you. If you had been near me, everything would have been different. I truly missed you.

ROBERT: You could have phoned me, sent me an e-mail, written a letter.

IGOR: It wasn't possible in this way. You know yourself that telephones are tapped, e-mails are checked up on, and letters are too slow and equally exposed.

ROBERT: But who would listen in on us?

*(Silence.)*

IGOR: You and Stella, you love each other?

ROBERT: Yes, we love each other. We have seven years of marriage behind us, yet it is as if we started going out only yesterday. Why do you ask?

IGOR: I am interested to know whether she is a woman before whom you can talk about anything.

ROBERT: Of course... What do you mean, about everything?

IGOR: Apart from loving her as a wife... do you breathe the same air in other things too?

ROBERT: Breathe the same air?

IGOR: Well, for example... can you speak openly with her about everything; does she have the same views on life, on politics, as you do?

ROBERT: Oh, yes. She is curious, well read. I can speak better with her about sociology than I can with the majority of my colleagues.

IGOR: It is wonderful to hear this. It is splendid when a man and a woman have common themes, when they are equally intellectually curious. I could not imagine life with a woman who has no interest in things that are essential to me.

ROBERT: This is why I did not marry for so long... I waited for the right one to come along.

IGOR: Yes, only that makes sense. A wife has to be a partner in everything.

*(Silence.)*

IGOR: You see, while I was at Father's grave, I thought: he would be proud if he could see us now. We have not failed him in any way, in no way whatsoever. And you would be proud of me, if only you knew everything, if I could tell you everything.

ROBERT: What are you talking about?

IGOR: Parents most often determine the destinies of their children, and the children later determine, orient, the destiny of adults. Do you agree with this?

ROBERT: In a certain way.

IGOR: You see, you are fourteen years older than I am. Because of all the circumstances, because of everything that has happened in our family,

after Dad's death, you became my spiritual father. And now... perhaps now the time has come for me to do for you what you once did, so selflessly, for me.

ROBERT: I don't know what you are talking about.

IGOR: I would like for our lives to become intertwined once more, for our destinies to be linked once more as one... do you understand?

ROBERT: Well, I have wanted this too, all these years. This is why I was unhappy that you were away for so long. I missed you too.

IGOR: I want you to know that I have not wasted my life on nonsense... I could not write to tell you what was happening to me, but you must know that I never failed you, not you and not Father.

*(Silence.)*

ROBERT: I am happy that you have succeeded, that you go round all of America and hold lectures at their universities. However, how the hell can you lecture about European transitional countries? You haven't lived here for nine whole years; surely knowledge of the reality and the people who live in the system that is being studied is important for political science...

IGOR: What has that got to do with it?

*(Silence.)*

ROBERT: I'm glad that you've succeeded; I'm glad that you have a fiancée whom you are going to marry, I'm glad that you have a brilliant future in front of you...

IGOR: What kind of a success, what kind of a future. You know yourself that all this in which we live, can provoke only a feeling of repulsion and disgust in the souls of thinking people. We are all unimportant and unsuccessful in such a world, wretched and replaceable. You know yourself where we are living, and that our future is not rosy.

ROBERT: What are you talking about?

IGOR: Remember what you fantasised about, what I fantasised about, what our late father fantasised about. Look at what this world boils down to. Just look at what our wretched country and tens of other countries have turned into. Just look at how unscrupulous traders dominate the whole world from centres of power, destroying every individualism and every sign of a special quality, reducing everything to profit and trade, seeing in

everything a source of acquisition of wealth.. Once, long ago, we hated socialism, and we rightly wished to overthrow and defeat it, imagining that after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the whole world would become better, without an arms race, without ideological conflicts, without exploitation. We naively believed that the West would help the East, forgetting that the West had never even helped the South. Forgetting that the model of liberal capitalism was equally corrupt, depraved and rotten to its core as the model of socialism. Just look at how the West has thrown itself into the partition and exploitation of former socialist countries, just look at how they have done everything they could to destroy the economic foundation of every one of the former socialist countries, just to colonise them afterwards, to gather up everything of value. What is most ridiculous is that they are now helped by one-time socialist politicians, who have overnight gone from being die-hard Communist ideologists to being advocates of free trade and globalisation. Scientific analyses say that in all these countries, it has led to an increase in unemployment, to the decanting of their essence, to an increase in addiction to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Only large companies and local politicians and thieves have once more, for the umpteenth time, registered the profits of the whole process. Don't forget that of the fifty largest multi-national companies, thirty-one of them have their headquarters in the United States of America. Don't forget that globalisation in its essence is Americanisation. Look at that annihilating picture of the world that Washington creates; look at that wretched spiritual and cultural poverty, which reduces all values to profit and consumption. Look at that wretched America that sells a story about democracy and multi-party systems, but for two hundred whole years has had itself a one-party system, which is realised through only two parties, controlled by the same centre of power. Do you realise that in that country, for two hundred years, no third party has been able to impose itself, no third possibility, and that all their inhabitants, with their washed out, depoliticised brains, think that this is normal. Disgusting!

ROBERT: I asked you why you haven't been home for nine years, and you come out with a treatise on the noxiousness of globalisation.

IGOR: This is the very reason that I have not been here all these years.

ROBERT: I don't understand you. Explain.

IGOR: This world is not a place in which a normal man would like to live; this world has been transformed into a hell ruled by the powerful. And I wanted to change this world, make it better, and I have been working on this all these years.

ROBERT: What are you talking about?

IGOR: Today, I can tell you... Today, when I was at Father's grave, I thought that he would be proud of me if he knew what was happening to me. He once selflessly fought for a better world; he once had ideals, just like you. The two of you deserve credit for the fact that I have not been reduced to an ordinary, conformist little university lecturer, to a wretched consumer to whom the meaning of life is to buy the latest product advertised on television... I think that you too will be proud of me when you find out... when I reveal to you what I have been doing for the last nine years.

ROBERT: What are you trying to say?

IGOR: Eight years ago, there in Washington on the post-grad course, there were hundreds of young people from Europe, from South America, from Asia... I found like-minded people, and we founded an organisation which decided to stand in the way of the strongest centre of power... change this apparently relentless flow of political and economic movements... this destruction of the world. This injustice that has been cast over the whole world.

ROBERT: But how?

IGOR: We are strong, Robert, we are strong... we are over the whole world... we are sufficiently young, courageous, educated and powerful to know what we have to do... After 11<sup>th</sup> September and everything which followed, with a story about an anti-terrorist coalition, we realised that the great world centre of power had set out on the enslavement of all the countries of the world under the cheap slogan of fighting terrorism. We realised that we had to begin to be effective. And we shall.

ROBERT: How?

IGOR: I cannot tell you. I may not; I am bound by an oath. However one day, you will understand everything, you will find out everything, and you'll be proud of your brother.

ROBERT: Why are you so secretive?

IGOR: Only when you become one of us, only then shall I be able to tell you, only then. And you should become one of us, you deserve this, not only because you are my brother and teacher, but because of all your activities up till now. You were brave, you were resolute, your thought was so sharp and unwavering, I remember...

*(Stella enters the room.)*

STELLA: Hello, everyone.

ROBERT: Hi, well only now you...

STELLA: I had a board meeting, so many problems and unnecessary conflicts with heads of departments. It is terrible how much vanity eats away at people and leads them to spend their energy on nonsense and triteness.

ROBERT: Did everything end well?

STELLA: Do you doubt it? You know that I am a resolute boss, and that in the end everything is as I wish it. And you? Have you been to the graveyard?

IGOR: We got back about fifteen minutes ago.

STELLA: Have I interrupted you in some important conversation?

IGOR: Absolutely not. We were talking about our childhood, about Dad... about mainly distant, past times.

ROBERT: Yes, nothing significant.

STELLA: Where are we going for lunch?

ROBERT: You decide.

*(The telephone rings.)*

ROBERT: Will you?

STELLA: I'll get it!

*(Stella lifts the receiver.)*

STELLA: Hello... oh, Mum, it's you... how are you, how's Dad... and the kids, are they listening to you? ... What problem? ... Peter's crying, he wants to go home... and Olga? Well tell him that he has to for the sake of his health... fine, I'll tell him, let me speak to him... How are you, darling, are you doing as Grandma says... She's making you cakes... and Granddad, are you listening to Granddad? ... Why? ... But you can't come home... you have to stay, son, for the sake of your health... oh, don't cry, you know that Mummy loves you, we'll come for you, we'll come, just not tomorrow... Daddy and I have a lot of work... I'll buy you... I'll buy you everything... There you go, Daddy says hello to you, he sends you a kiss... well, just you listen to Grandma and Granddad and I'll buy you everything... hand me over to your sister, come on... hand me Olga... Hi,

sweetie, how are you? But you can't come home darling, come on, don't you start now... don't cry angel, just another couple of days... come on Olga. Please! ...

Scene 5

(Robert, Igor, Stella, Maria)

*(In the kitchen, Robert, Igor, Stella and Maria are preparing lunch.)*

ROBERT: We didn't even know what you looked like, or what the tone of your voice was like... my brother never sent us a single photograph of you... In a word, we are happy that you are with us now, welcome to our family, and we wish you to feel at your ease in this house and in this city. Your health!

EVERYONE: Your health!

MARIA: Thank you for the lovely words.

*(Silence.)*

STELLA: We could go on an outing to the lake next weekend.

IGOR: I'm not sure whether I can make it.

STELLA: You have obligations, or...?

IGOR: Some friends of mine should be coming to the city, I think that I shall have to be with them.

ROBERT: Friends from Mexico or from Washington?

IGOR: From Mexico.

STELLA: If you like, bring them here for a drink or for lunch.

IGOR: I'm afraid that they'll be busy. I'll probably go alone with them.

STELLA: Then we can take Maria with us to the lake.

MARIA: I'd love that... I've always loved to be near the water... it is all the same to me whether it is a lake, a river, the sea... but the nearness of water is so soothing.

STELLA: When were you last here?

MARIA: Fifteen years ago... my parents travelled incessantly as anthropologists... from continent to continent. Our whole lives passed with adaptation to new cities, new countries, different foods and customs. It sometimes

seems to me that we can envy people who spend their whole lives in one town or village.

ROBERT: They probably envy us.

IGOR: Socrates spent his whole life in Athens... imagine, he never left Athens... and in his time it was a small town with only twenty thousand free citizens. However despite this, he succeeded in becoming the greatest philosopher of his time, and much more.

ROBERT: But you must admit that he chose the right town... and the right time in which to be born.

STELLA: His end, the manner in which he lost his life, bears witness to the fact that he was not so clever, as historians show him to be. He pursued malice; he played with his destiny. I think that in a certain way, he was naïve.

IGOR: Why? Only because he had ideals that were dearer to him than life? Is life without ideals worth anything at all?

STELLA: All the same, I think that he lost his life because of stubbornness and the inability to adapt. Today nobody can identify with him; I was at a lecture when students ridiculed him as an irresponsible adventurer.

IGOR: Today, when nobody believes in anything, today when nobody has a higher purpose, Socrates gives us the impression of an irrational, stubborn man, instead of us asking ourselves what has happened to people to whom Socrates' life and death have become a subject of ridicule.

*(Silence.)*

MARIA: Don't forget that your Socrates was condemned to death by democratic voting. He is good proof of the fact that the worst things can be done with democratic methods.

IGOR: I agree with you on that. However, he had the opportunity of escaping the death penalty, and he still refused this, saying that his opponents, it is true from bad intentions, but still within the law, condemned him, and he would rather die than break the law.

## Scene 6

(Igor, Maria)

IGOR: You just need time; everything will be the same.

MARIA: No, Igor, nothing will be like before any more, as I am not who I was before.

IGOR: Don't let yourself be changed and distanced from yourself because of what happened to your parents; don't let that accident determine your life.

MARIA: But it already has happened... When my aunt invited me to Italy... you know that I have never been to church since my childhood, I was so distanced from God, from religion... but, when she called, it was as if some invisible force had thrown me into her embrace. I agreed from the first, I packed my bags and hurried to her in Italy, as if I knew that I would find the remedy for my despair... And truly: I who had not prayed in years... I who had distanced myself from God, from myself... I suddenly discovered a lost world; I suddenly found the firmest support...

IGOR: What are you trying to tell me?

MARIA: I have come to believe, Igor. And I have found peace and solace in this faith... and after this, I realised that I was no longer the same person as before...

IGOR: Maria... instead of being my right hand in this, you talk to me about your religious sensations, about a return to God, and similar puerility.

MARIA: If you could only observe the world with my eyes for a moment, you would realise that it is not the world that needs to be changed, but our souls. The problem is not in this world that resembles hell, but in us, who accept the rules of such a world.

IGOR: I have done my best my whole life to change this world, to make it better.

MARIA: If we begin to act in the way that you imagined, we shall become worse moral monstrosities than the people against whom the action is directed.

IGOR: You are truly exaggerating. And in the most perfidious manner, you take the meaning from our action. I am not doing all this for myself, but for the world, which is sinking into chaos. I shall expose my life and my safety to the greatest dangers for the salvation of millions of others, who do not

even know how even to observe their misfortune. I beg you, find the strength to continue the fight...

MARIA: But a world without God no longer interests me, a world in which people are slaves to their instincts and vanity, and a world in which the desire for power is above everything. If this mankind that you wish to save, after this action of yours, has equally callous inhabitants, to whom consumer measures are everything, then I do not see the point of your action. If the souls remain cold and empty, believe me: it is completely unimportant who the masters of these souls are. I think that you have chosen the wrong way of saving the world.

IGOR: Maria, I agree that for the renewal of the West, the renewal of religiousness will be needed, but first it is necessary to solve the problem of exploitation from the strongest centre of power, which devours everything and everyone who stands in the way of corporative capital. Let us change the masters of the world and the West before we make endeavours to work on the return of the wittiness of Western man.

*(Silence.)*

MARIA: You don't believe.

IGOR: What do you mean?

MARIA: Admit that you don't believe in God.

IGOR: Oh come on, please, this is not crucial now... I don't go to church regularly, simply because I don't have time, and this is not crucial, I have a different task in this world.

MARIA: In all these vehement political scientific and sociological theories, what was lacking was a view of the desolation of man's life, the desolateness of a heart out of which God has been driven. And you see, I have only now reached the conclusion that for a change to the world and to our hearts, neither a sniper, a combat aircraft, an aircraft carrier nor a change in the capital stock-exchange is necessary... None of this has anything to do with our essence, with our happiness and unhappiness.

*(Silence.)*

IGOR: You have truly changed.

MARIA: I am glad that you see this.

*(Silence.)*

IGOR: We were once one soul and one body, united in the same dreams of a better world. And now I am no longer certain whether you love me at all. Truly, say it: do you still love me?

MARIA: I still love you, I love you, but... I don't want you to become a murderer.

IGOR: Tens of thousands of people in the world die daily of hunger and humiliation, because of a man for whose life you strive so zealously. I truly don't understand where the Christianity is here, where the faith and religiousness are, where the morality is.

Scene 7

(Stella, Maria)

STELLA: Nobody can change a man like a woman, family life. When I had the twins, I was thirty-nine years old, as was Robert... These children were a real shock for him, a surprise. However at the same time, a turning point in his character. You didn't know him before, I don't know what Igor has told you about my Robert, but he was, once, when he lived alone, a typical single man, as I was after all a typical single woman... He was, before our marriage, unreal in some way, sometimes even exclusive, sometimes he was a slave to exaggerated ideals, which had no foothold in reality. After we began living together, after the children came, in the space of a year, he acquired a sense of reality, knowing that we cannot observe everything in a black and white context. He realised that everyday life had countless nuances. Perhaps it will sound too pathetic and radical to you, but... I have begun to believe that only with me and with our children has he become a man of flesh and blood. If you know what I mean.

*(Silence.)*

MARIA: Your closeness can be seen at first sight. It is obvious that you are real partners.

STELLA: This didn't happen in one day. I had patience... a woman must have patience. Men are sometimes so impulsive and uncontrolled... They are often so contradictory: they want our embraces, but at the same time they are afraid of them. They fear losing their personalities, their ridiculous freedom, with which even so they don't know what to do.

MARIA: I agree with you. In general, today people magnify individuality and freedom, and at the bottom of all this is ordinary egoism and the need to be allowed to do what we would not wish others to do to us. I was also until recently like this: conceited, egoistic, and concentrated on the exterior and not on what is essential... When that happened to my parents... when my world caved in overnight, the world I thought was... In fact it is wrong that our whole childhood, youth, family and society prepared for us for a life in a manner as if everything would be according to our ideas, according to our plans, as if we could programme our thoughts and our emotions, as if we would always be the same, and as if no single death would ever occur... how we have driven death out of Western civilisation, how we attempt to protect ourselves from any thought of death... Once everything was different, life and death were equally legitimate, closely related... Children went to funerals, sick people died at home, and not in hospitals, a funeral was an important social event... And today... everything has become dehumanised, even dying ...

Sorry, I'm a little mixed up... I began to say one thing, and the words took me in another direction. Sorry.

STELLA: It's fine.

MARIA: Only when my parents were killed did I observe my life in all its essence. I was horrified at what I saw. I was horrified at the devastation into which I had plunged.

STELLA: It is essential to turn to the future, to what is in front of you and Igor. It is essential not to allow the ground to be swept from under your feet, not to lose the feeling for reality and everyday life. It is essential to find a purpose and ...

MARIA: No, Stella, no. We are not all the same. We don't all ask the same questions, to be able to be satisfied by the same answers. I realised overnight that everything was exactly the opposite of what I had believed my whole life. I needed a support, and I realised overnight that supports were too fragile in reality, and that the meaning of life was not reducible to anything material and exterior. All this that we live, in the manner in which we live, if we don't believe, if we don't have a foothold, then all this really has no point...

*(Silence.)*

STELLA: I have met people in my work who have touched the bottom, people who have found themselves in a blind alley. People have come to me who could not get over the deaths of their wives, or husbands, or fathers, or mothers, people who had always considered that it is best to weep your fill to the end, without stopping and restraint, and then in rationalisation to gradually arrange the whole mosaic of your shaken, chaotic life.

MARIA: Why do you so insist on rationalisation? Don't you know how many people have failed in their whole lives because of a need for rationalisation? How many of them have never fallen in love, precisely because they have rationalised everything, how many of them have missed the essence of life because of the need for everything that happens to them to be expressed with clear, mathematical formulae.

STELLA: Still, you must admit, we are not irrational beings, we are not insensible animals.

MARIA: Nor are we machines.

## Scene 8

(Igor, Robert)

IGOR: It is very simple to recognise and define American nationalism. It endeavours to impose its culture on the whole world, and proclaim itself the leading world nation, assuming more rights for themselves than others have. They emphasise in every way American values as values that are above civilisation, in other words superior to the values of other nations. And they impose their values on others through the cultural industry. Film has played a key role in this, films in which you see only robberies, violence, numerous murders, Satanism, and of course, always and repeatedly, the American flag. The banal art of modest artistic ranges has become a general worldwide culture, which is entering the cultural conscience of mankind. As well as this, American nationalism is harsh and critical to all critics of Americanisation; it brands and disqualifies them as nationalists and right-wingers. As well as this, American nationalism is harsh and critical to all critics of Americanisation, branding them and describing them as non-democrats and nationalists.

ROBERT: True, but you simplify things too much, and you try in everything to find a deliberate and calculated resentment, a cunning plan to destroy the world. You forget that the most significant processes in the history of human society have developed almost irrationally, often actuated by unclear, fluid movements, which would grip masses, peoples, states, continents. Globalisation has several different forms. It is sometimes economic, sometimes political and sometimes cultural and ecological globalisation. There is also communicational globalisation, which is often spoken about superficially. It is logical that in the world in which we live, economic globalisation strengthens a greater and greater role in the economic system, the financial markets and global institutions such as the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF... I know that there is the danger of different monopolies, but thanks to political globalisation, it is possible to strengthen democracy in all the countries of the world, and to create a specific shock absorber with the help of transitional political institutions, and a net of national and trans-national non-governmental organisations.

IGOR: Surely you don't believe in the good intentions of those who operate those processes.

ROBERT: It's not a question of my believing, but about the fact that greater numbers of mutually contradictory processes are always developing in parallel, making themselves complete in a certain way, together forming the dynamics of social movements. It is certain that those who lead the processes of globalisation in an economic sense wish to mitigate negative processes.

IGOR: Well, you see, I don't believe in their good intentions. Or, to be precise, I know with confidence that their intentions are negative, and that their uttermost objective is always, absolutely always, profit and only profit, and, of course, political control, power and influence in all the spheres of life. I know that our people, our intellectuals, don't think too much about this. It is all so far from us. That's what they thought eighty-five years ago, that the October Revolution was far from us, but socialism soon rolled in to every doorstep in this city. The anti-globalist movement has become our reality.

ROBERT: However, the weaknesses of the anti-globalist movement can also be seen, in the markedly high level of fragmentation among its participants. On one side, there are the members of the labour movement, on the other side are organised movements for the protection of the environment and on the third side are the internationalists. Such an incoherent group cannot be efficacious, as every grouping has different interests, in the future perhaps even opposing ones.

IGOR: This is correct. We are aware of this. This is why our organisation exists, which is above all particular interests. It is clear to us that only we can be directly and ultimately efficacious, but the support of the critical mass that has become aware of the deficiencies and damage of vulgar globalisation means a lot to us. After we go out into the public with our activities, after we successfully carry out our first action, everything will change. And I would like, I would like immensely, for you to be beside us in these moments. In the moments when the history of mankind will change.

*(Silence.)*

ROBERT: Igor, this "big event" about which you are talking... I know what it is.

IGOR: Tell me.

ROBERT: The newspapers are full of reports about the American president coming to visit our country in twenty days' time. This "big event" is without doubt connected with the coming of the American president. Is it not so?

*(Silence.)*

ROBERT: Have I not guessed it?

IGOR: I can't tell you.

ROBERT: Are you going to keep secrets from me?

IGOR: If you were one of our members...

ROBERT: I'm your brother, I am not your member.

*(Silence.)*

ROBERT: So, I'm right. Silence is the most eloquent confirmation.

IGOR: You are putting me in a difficult situation.

ROBERT: Come on; tell me it all to the end. You see that I have understood what it's about.

*(Silence.)*

IGOR: In twenty days' time, the American president is coming to visit our country. Our president will receive him. The protocol is already defined. At a certain moment, while they are visiting a particular castle, our man, as a sniper, will kill the American president. A month later, we shall also kill the leading people of ten multinational corporations. After this, they will realise that a new centre of power exists, which can control them... Then we shall lay down conditions, what kind of decisions the World Bank and the IMF must make. We'll tell them what we expect from them at the G8 meeting... If they turn a deaf ear to our demands, we'll repeat this bloody day... They'll become the lever of our power, thanks to which we shall repair, improve this wretched world. We shall be led by the ideals of justice and goodness, ideals of the betterment of all living beings in all countries of the East and the West, the North and the South.

ROBERT: At first I thought that you were going to carry out some action of protest... You want to realise your objectives with the methods of early anarchy.

IGOR: And what else is left for us...

ROBERT: You really intend to kill the American president?

IGOR: That is why I am here. I'm the leader of the whole operation. It will happen at my signal. My people are coming in ten days' time. Believe me: everything is so well planned that success will be forthcoming.

ROBERT: But, if you kill the American president on our territory, our country will be excommunicated, and now when we have finally become close to the West.

IGOR: They won't banish us from the world community only after his murder, we have long ago been banished from the club of the privileged. We are just an unimportant colony.

ROBERT: Are you at all aware of all possible consequences? How can you be sure of the propriety of your behaviour?

IGOR: Brother, I have dedicated my whole life to this. Globalisation was meant to be the breaking down of various barriers. And they 'sold' such an image to me too, as a young student. For those who do not belong to the business class of world society, globalisation in fact means the limitation of admittance to things most important for survival, for them it is a fence, and not a bridge. We have to fight against such a world. Lies have become such a dominant guiding principle of world politics, that we can only expose them with drastic measures.

ROBERT: And step into terrorism in doing so.

IGOR: What is terrorism at all? We shall call the violence of the big against the small a new world system, and the blows in return of the small, we shall call nationalism or terrorism, as the case may be that it suits the big players. Just look at how the concept of 'terrorism' has been misused since the 11<sup>th</sup> September. The fear of terrorism is used for the setting in motion of a war against a huge number of movements in the world, of which some are markedly positive. It is not essential to the greatest centre of power whether they declare terrorists people who oppose hegemony, people who fight for their own lives, for independence, for their own country, against occupation or against privatisation. The same language is used against everyone, only if they are standing in the way of the interests of one of the centres of power, and especially if it is a question of the strongest centre of power.

ROBERT: Do you know with certainty who makes up this 'greatest centre of power'?

IGOR: Of course I know. We are not ingenuous. We see where this world is recklessly heading. There are people among us who want a better world, even although they could live an easy life in this existing one, even if they could be excellently accepted and paid for their loyalty. It is clear to us that all of mankind is in jeopardy, and that it is high time that the principle of evil is restrained and exchanged for the principle of good.

ROBERT: If it's all as you claim it is, what does it mean at all to kill the American president and the heads of the ten largest multinational corporations?! Each one of them has a deputy. You will not change the system like this. This is a point of no return.

IGOR: From you I have learned courage.

*(Silence)*

ROBERT: You cannot deny that globalised capitalism also has certain good sides; it is not all as black as you say.

IGOR: This system is highly dangerous for small countries, I can even say destructive, they fall from debt to debt, and depend on international financial institutes, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The result of this is that their free activities are drastically limited. A country in debt has to reduce the income of its own citizens, cut down on social services, and invest in the manner in which their creditors order, if they should be able to pay off their overdue credits which are greater and greater every year. This is pure usury, modern colonialism. And what is saddest is that such vassal colonised countries, and ours is one of them, must have such a government, which knows how to wrap up its vassalage in an acceptable package and sell it to its citizens, so that all this would proceed under the conditions of social peace and apparent national pride... for how can you tell a beggar that he is a beggar. Big corporations invest big money to discredit local, national movements, and for the very idea of national states to be destroyed as obsolete and fascist. What is most absurd is that capitalist corporations find today in this slave labour the best allies in the rows of former Communists, left-wingers and humanists, who reject every idea of national domiciliation. Some kind of united front is formed, between left-wing internationalism and globalised capitalism. And the perspective of mankind, the perspective of all of us, is so black that it couldn't be blacker: the empire of a big, inhumane multi-national corporation - the blackest dictatorship, like no single futurist could imagine. The small are left with desperation and false hopes... They want individuals to disappear, and for only consumers and producers to remain. When they destroy all natural wealth and pollute every river, they know that the last source of drinkable water will be in their hands. Although, certainly, it will not be found in the territory of their state.

Scene 9

(Igor, Maria)

MARIA: Forgive me, I thought that I would never have to say this to you. I thought that you'd understand.

*(Silence.)*

MARIA: You know yourself how much you meant to me.

*(Silence.)*

IGOR: For me nothing has changed, nothing at all. I feel the same for you as I did before. I'm sorry if I've offended you in some way.

MARIA: It's not your fault. It's me who has changed, not you.

IGOR: I love you, Maria.

MARIA: I love you too. And you know that I love you.

IGOR: But, why then?

MARIA: I've had enough of secrecy, of hiding. Life is not as I saw it until recently. Forgive me, but I no longer believe that your conduct is right.

*(Silence.)*

IGOR: I feel that everything is falling out of my hands. You're rejecting me, and my own brother doesn't understand me. Now when I need you most, you're leaving me.

MARIA: No, Igor, I'm not leaving you, I just don't want to spend my whole life doing things in which I don't believe, which I condemn. I've come to the conviction that we wanted to repair this world in the wrong way. And worse than this – I'm convinced that your actions could even worsen this reality, about which you care so much. If you give this up, I am prepared to continue to live with you in the manner that millions of small, humble people do.

*(Silence.)*

IGOR: You know I can't go back.

MARIA: You don't want to.

IGOR: I can't

MARIA: This is insane, what you intend, this is not a manner which...

IGOR: Don't try to make me waver. I am sufficiently firm and courageous that nobody in this world can make me waver.

Scene 10

(Robert, Stella)

*(The telephone rings. Stella lifts the receiver.)*

STELLA: Yes, hello. Who's speaking? Anna, it's you? No, he's not at home. I don't know when he's coming, why, haven't you already submitted your Masters... I thought you were going to call less now... You're sorry and you feel bad... Well, I would do too... Goodbye!

ROBERT: Are you in your right mind? How could you, like some kind of common fishwife?

STELLA: Listen; I've had enough of that little madam and her phone calls.

ROBERT: What are you talking about; you're behaving like a jealous market woman. Madame psychiatrist, cure yourself.

STELLA: Yes, I am jealous, and I'll poke both your and her eyes out if she doesn't get out of our lives promptly.

ROBERT: You're really unbearable.

STELLA: And I'll get worse, if you don't stop keeping her company.

ROBERT: But I've got nothing going on with her, just like I had nothing going on with the last five people of the female sex whom you distanced from me in an equally insolent manner in the last year. Stella, I won't tolerate this any longer.

STELLA: Don't you dare tell me that you won't tolerate this. I'm the one who should say to you that I am sick of being provoked.

ROBERT: But I have truly never had anything going on with this girl.

STELLA: And how do I know this? How can I believe you when eighty percent of your colleagues are female? This is no coincidence.

ROBERT: Don't stifle me! Of course, it's not a coincidence, when in this country, eighty percent of people in sociology are of the female sex.

STELLA: Stop provoking me, and I shan't stifle you.

ROBERT: Get rid of this pathological jealousy, Madame Psychiatrist. Decide, are you the patient or the doctor.

STELLA: Oh, don't provoke me!

*(Silence)*

STELLA: Have you finished your report?

ROBERT: Not yet. It's simply... it's not going. I've got no concentration.

*(Silence)*

STELLA: I couldn't sleep last night... not until just before dawn... I can't get your stupid brother out of my head.

ROBERT: And worst of all is that he is grateful to me and his late father that he now is precisely the way he is.

STELLA: This is awful for us, for our children, for their future. Imagine one day living with the fact that we are family of the man who organised the murder of the American president. It's clear to you that you would no longer be able to work as the manager of the Institute, and they would not allow me to run a psychiatric hospital either. It could even come out that we offered him shelter, helped him in all this.

ROBERT: I agree, but ... what can we do? It's clear that I can't allow him to organise and carry out this assassination. And yet, I can't report my own brother to the police. I can't do it, for his sake and for my own.

STELLA: I understand this. However, you have to protect the two of us and our children. I hope that this is clear to you.

ROBERT: Of course it's clear to me, just ... how? Do you have any suggestions?

STELLA: Well... I think I do.

ROBERT: Really?

STELLA: The problem is that ... you and I have to pull off this move... we have to be the ones to thwart Igor in his intention.

ROBERT: Listen... I wouldn't particularly like for a story to go around that the manager of the Institute for Sociological Research has reported his own brother for organising a murder, and that this brother then served ten or fifteen years in gaol for this... I really don't need this. And imagine if they really do kill the president! That I am the brother of the leader... With such a reputation, I think that I can kiss goodbye to my career... I don't think that anyone would ever invite me to a single symposium again.

Everybody knows that my brother is much younger than me, and that I was his guardian for years. Therefore the person most responsible for his formation. Do you realise how complex and hopeless this is...

STELLA: If you agree with me, don't worry, for I have the solution.

ROBERT: Well, out with it once and for all!

STELLA: You see, I also agree that you, as his brother, cannot report him to the police, just as you cannot allow him to do what he wants to do. Therefore, we agree on this.

ROBERT: Yes, and?

STELLA: But, if your brother was a mentally unstable person... if you and I heard about his ideas... and if I assessed that these ideas about assassination were the sign of a destructive psychosis that was shattering his nerves, then he would be the ideal patient for my new department.

ROBERT: Yes, but, listen... how can I ... he's still my brother.

STELLA: You know yourself that in my special department there are those who fancy that they are being poisoned by genetically modified food, and those who believe that the secret services are eavesdropping on them every day... he'll feel good among them... this is a new kind of patient who cannot cope in the new world.

ROBERT: Well, it's a little awkward.

STELLA: If you've got a better solution, feel free to suggest it. This is just the least bad. If you can think up something better, I'll willingly accept it... it's just that we don't have much time... or rather, we don't have any time at all. From what I've gathered from his telephone conversation, his friends are arriving in two days.

*(Silence.)*

ROBERT: I'd try to have one more chat with him about everything.

STELLA: Try to talk to him, but as soon as possible.

Scene 11

(Robert, Igor, later Stella)

*(We find Robert and Igor in the middle of a bitter argument.)*

ROBERT: Of course this is adventurism... Adventurism is when you get involved in actions that you can't control, and which threaten to take you over and jeopardise many lives. You are provoking destiny, you want to make all of us hostages of your rash moves...

IGOR: I'm not doing this for myself, for selfish reasons. I was certain that you would comprehend me, understand my actions. For at one time, you and Father were people with ideals, who were prepared to fight for a better world.

ROBERT: That was before; times were different then, and other...

IGOR: Everything is the same now. Just more perfidious and dangerous. When they stole oil, which was not theirs, and destroyed countries, which were to have been richer than them thanks to oil, when they cut down forests and virgin forests around South America, and installed non-democratic governments, which thwarted them in this, it seemed that the end of this vulgar liberal imperialism had come. However, this was not enough for them, now they are taking everything: drinkable water, banks, governments. All the countries of the world want to subordinate themselves, suck out the blood from everyone. All that will exist will be profit, enjoyment, cheap art for drugged-up brainwashed heads, and corrupted, frivolous journalism. I do not wish to live in a world like this, I am prepared to fight for my ideals. I hope that you, who have brought me up and formed me as a man, can understand and accept all of this.

ROBERT: You are simplifying life. You, unfortunately, are in the world of your own fixations, and you could do things which you will regret all your life. Always throughout history, and today too, processes have developed which have been good for some and bad for others, but which have been inevitable and unstoppable for everyone. Sometimes, adapting is by far a more fruitful and more creative approach than offering resistance. Have the small ever created global events? They have only been able to adapt better or worse to them, and win over power wielders for themselves. A division to the left or to the right no longer means anything, for left and right touch upon each other in many ways, and both the one and the other can be misused. And everything will always be the same.

IGOR: But, the division between good and bad is eternal.

ROBERT: And who of us will determine what is good, and what is bad?

IGOR: I hope that fear and cowardice are not the reasons for your speaking like this. Or something even worse.

ROBERT: What?

IGOR: Conformism.

ROBERT: What are you trying to say?

IGOR: You are the manager of the state Institute for Sociology, your wife is the manager of the most notable psychiatric hospital... yesterday you were at the reception of a minister, of a man who, during socialism, attacked you as a backward intellectual, only because you brought into question the concept of socialist impeccability in your texts.

ROBERT: Well, come on... and ... grant that some people can evolve. Times are different now, really. The greatest conformism is to allow eternal idealism to yourself, and society remains the same anyway. Now you're even reproaching me. As if I couldn't reproach you for many things.

IGOR: For example?

ROBERT: Your ingratitude, your departure to America. You wanted so much to go to America, you wanted so much to make a breakthrough in your life, you thought so much only of your career, that not for a moment did you ask yourself how I felt then.

IGOR: What are you saying?

ROBERT: You were everything for me, my whole family. You were like a son to me. You fulfilled my life like children fulfil their parents' lives, and then you suddenly packed your bags and said: "I want to go to America," not asking yourself what I felt, and how much this would cost. Don't forget that your first year was at my expense... I even got into debt because of you, for the first time in my life I got into debt.

IGOR: You never told me this.

ROBERT: You never asked me.

IGOR: Sorry, but I must give this back to you, compensate, tell me how much...

ROBERT: Oh come on, get lost. This cannot and does not need to be compensated. I just ask you, don't now do something that could destroy you. Don't

jeopardise yourself, and don't jeopardise my family, my wife and my children. I want at least a relatively normal life. My father destroyed my childhood, and I destroyed my youth myself, tilting exhaustingly at windmills. I lived so many years as an outcast, like a scabby cur. I no longer have the strength for this. Do not do this to yourself. I was a lone wolf. I thought that it was best for a man of my mould to go through life alone. Luckily, Stella appeared. Only in the last few years have I lived a normal life, accepted by the community. Please, don't take this away from me.

IGOR: You've become a slimy Philistine.

ROBERT: Maybe, maybe that's the term for people who have excess emotions and who love their families, maybe I have truly become a coward and a weakling, but believe me that I want you to come in contact with a normal life too, I want to spare you the disappointments and destruction into which you are dashing headlong, recklessly. Please, for you, for me and for my family, don't gamble with lives.

IGOR: Nothing can stop me, don't you understand, nothing! And please, don't try to prevent me in my intention with emotional rhetoric, don't at least you betray me. Do you not see that Maria has betrayed me? The woman in whom I believed absolutely. Robert, please, don't try to make me waver, persuading me to look at life through the eyes of ordinary people, for if I do that it will be even more difficult for me than it is now... You can imagine how much strength I need, so as not to doubt, not to deviate from my ideals even for a moment, not to yield to fear and emotions. I'm not doing this for my own benefit; I'm doing this for the salvation of others, for a better world. Please, if you don't appreciate my sacrifice, at least don't belittle it, don't ridicule me, don't provoke me with words that could lead me to doubt and indecision.

*(At this moment, Stella enters the room, carrying a small book in her hand.)*

STELLA: Sorry if I've interrupted you.

IGOR: No, everything's fine.

STELLA: I found this on the bedside table beside your bed. I think Maria forgot it.

IGOR: Ah, the New Testament... I'll give her it... I'll send her it by post. She got ready in a hurry, so she must have forgotten it.

ROBERT: She'll be sorry when she sees that she's forgotten it. I noticed that she often had in her hands that... that New Testament.

IGOR: She got it from her aunt as a present.

*(Igor goes out.)*

STELLA: Grandma called. In three days' time we're going to my parents' for the kids. They've been crying again, and my folks have really had it up to here with them.

ROBERT: How I've missed them.

STELLA: I have too. When they're at home, we can hardly breathe because of them, and as soon as they go, we began to miss them so.

*(Silence.)*

STELLA: Did you manage?

ROBERT: No. It was like talking to the deaf.

STELLA: This is awful; this is horrific. You must prevent him from doing this.

ROBERT: He doesn't listen to me at all. He's completely engrossed in his Robin Hood film.

STELLA: Then you'll have to report him.

ROBERT: But he's my brother.

STELLA: For this very reason. We have to save him. We have to think of our children. They have the right to a normal life, a normal childhood and youth.

ROBERT: I know, I know, I know all this; I just don't know how to get us out of this trap. Whatever we do, it is bad, bad for us and bad for him.

STELLA: It would have been better for everyone if he hadn't come.

ROBERT: I am so sick to my stomach of everything. My head is sore from thinking, of deciding. My whole life I have been forced to make decisions, to take positions, while others...

Scene 12

(Igor, Stella)

*(In a semi-dark room, we see only one chair, and on this chair sits Igor, in a straitjacket, his arms bound behind his back. Stella enters the room in a white medical coat. She approaches the switch and turns on the light.)*

STELLA: Wake up! Come on, open your eyes.

*(Igor opens his eyes.)*

STELLA: I want you to be awake, I want you to hear me well, for this will be the last thing that you hear and understand.

IGOR: Aaaaa!

STELLA: Do not try to speak, as you cannot speak. You have been given a drug that has blocked all your muscles, and the functions of your mouth.

IGOR: Aaaaa!

STELLA: That's it, that's it. Your tongue is not listening to you. Because I wanted it not to listen to you. However because of this, your reason is serving you well, and you will fathom and understand what I have to say to you.

IGOR: Aaaaa!

STELLA: Be quiet! Listen to me and don't try to answer me, otherwise I shall have to be brutal with you. You have assessed everything wrongly in your life, everything. You wanted to change world politics... For your information: yesterday and the day before, the American president visited our country... and everything went perfectly. Today's papers are full of the praise of ordinary citizens who are very happy that the greatest power of the world has showed us mercy and agreed to be our protector... for anyone who loses their mercy is destined to ruin, failure and misery... you should know this. You wished our country evil, you wished the whole world evil... you think that people like you should create the destiny of mankind... you wretch... You fight for a justice, which has never existed, never. This justice of yours, this better world, is impossible, for you start out with the assumption that the world can exist without a guardian, without one powerful centre of power. You forget that chaos would arise in this situation, you forget that it has always been known in history who the master is, who the patron is, who the boss is... This is how it was in ancient Roman times, this is how it was in the time of ancient Athens, this is how it was in the time of London, and in the time... and somebody

always has to be the central master. Believe me: we live in the best of all possible worlds. I know its faults, however I also know of hundred-fold worse alternatives, which could have been imposed...

IGOR           Aaaaa!

STELLA:       And your brother was also unreal at one time, his head in the clouds, an idealist without sufficient funds. Beside me, he became a man of flesh and blood, thanks to me, he became partial to a normal life. I bore him two children, helped him to become socialised, to no longer be a ridiculous rebel in middle age, and to become a constructive citizen, the protector of his family, the eminent manager of an eminent institution. Thanks to me, he learned that a child's laughter, a family Sunday lunch and the warmth of home is worth more than great gestures and solving the world's problems. And just when we had built our union, with little joys and little problems, but so warm, so human, so ours – you appeared with your sick, ideas of adventurism that almost destroyed our lives, our happiness and the happiness of our little children. You have become the greatest danger for the happiness of my family, for our future. You have become my nightmare.

IGOR           Aaaaa!

STELLA:       Shut up! However, fortunately, just as you fight for your ideals, I have also decided to fight for my ideals. And my ideal is a happy, successful little family, with little children who have a future and their place in this society, which is as it should be. The fact that you have ended up in a psychiatric hospital, in my department, for people like you, for people who are dangerous for new society, is, believe me, the best possible end for you. Because the alternative was death... However... it is clear to you why I am telling you all this, it is clear to you that you may now know too much, and that with this, you may no longer live as a rational being, who could even flee from here. And jeopardise us once more.

*(Stella takes a syringe out of the drawer.)*

STELLA:       Thank God, science has advanced. You see this syringe. When I inject this into you, after five minutes, such chaos will develop in your brain that all memory and all knowledge will evaporate from you. You will be reduced to the mind of a one-year-old child. The power of speech will remain, but never again will you utter a thought out sentence.

IGOR:           Aaaaa!

STELLA:       You are lucky that I am the manager here. Thanks to me, you will get food regularly, and your nappies will be changed regularly... however I shall

not be able to do more than this for you. I am sorry that you have not given me the possibility of a choice., I am sorry that you have come into my life at all. You'll be fine here., I shall take care of you more than for any other patient. This is the best solution for all of us. And another thing: be aware that I have always despised people like you. If there is one thing that has made me sick in life, it is passionate rectifiers of the world. And now, rebel, farewell.

*(She approaches him with the syringe. Sudden darkness and Igor's scream.)*

## Scene 13

(Robert)

*(Robert steps onto the platform, and places the papers from his report on the lectern.)*

ROBERT: Honourable participants of the symposium, Honourable Minister of Health, ladies and gentlemen! The title of my exposure is ‘The Perspectives of Globalisation Processes in Transitional Countries’... We are often prepared to speak about globalisation in a superficial and simplified, and often incorrect, manner, and to interpret its positive effects maliciously. Nilgun Celebi described globalisation in simple terms as ‘circulation of knowledge, money and man around the globe.’ Henry Teune noted that ‘those who support globalisation as a positive political development, not merely an opportunity to make more money, believe that globalisation not only produces more wealth, but also provides more choices for individuals to be in societies which are consistent with and nurture their own values’... If we observe the new world system which is emerging, and if we observe our own country and our future... We must change the sceptics’ question of whether we need globalisation into the question of how to keep up with the processes that have long ago begun in the world, and particularly in the West, to which we naturally aspire. For, if we engage ourselves in the question of whether we need globalisation, we shall exhaust ourselves in futile hair-splitting with conservative and suspicious sceptics, and while we come to the answer, we could find ourselves at the tail end of history, political and economic events... It is better for us to realise as soon as possible that transitional countries such as ours must, the sooner the better, catch up with the processes necessary for the improvement of our society, so that we shall become participants in the building of the great, common house which will be created by all the forward peoples, nations and states who had the strength to overpower the old-fashioned concept of the national state, sacrifice just a little of our sovereignty in order to become ourselves in the future a building element of new and better world...

***THE END***

Note: In my work on this drama, I used the texts of numerous political scientists, sociologists, thinkers and journalists. M.G.