

**Miro Gavran**

**DREAMHOUSE**

**( Dramedy )**

**-Third Draft-**

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**Characters:**

**VIKTOR**.....50, later 55

**DUBRAVKA**, Viktor's wife.....50, later 55

**DAVOR**, Viktor's and Dubravka's son.....19, later 24

**TONI**, Viktor's and Dubravka's son.....19, later 24

**ZDRAVKO**, tycoon.....55, later 60

**ANITA**, Zdravko's third wife.....30, later 35

**IVA**, Zdravko's fourth wife.....28

**ALBERT**.....40, later 45

**BORIS**.....50, later 55

**NATASA**, wife of Boris.....48, later 53

**KATA**, maid.....55, then 60

**MARINA**, gardner.....48, then 53

## ACT ONE

(When curtain rises, on stage are Viktor and Dubravka SR. Not far off are Boris and Natasa, and SL Zdravko and Anita. Not far off we see Albert. All are looking to the audience, ie “The House” in front of them)

**VIKTOR:** Look at that. Is she a beauty or what?

**DUBRAVKA:** She sure is.

**VIKTOR:** Our Dream House. Great location. New, modern.

**DUBRAVKA:** Beautiful garden..if my mother were alive, she would cry tears of joy.

**VIKTOR:** Why aren't you crying?

**DUBRAVKA:** I am a strong woman, I flirt with feminism, I never cry. Never in public, not in front of others, even my husband.

(lights zoom in on Boris and Natasa)

**BORIS:** What do you say?

**NATASA:** Gorgeous.... Too bad we are not on the ground floor.

**BORIS:** I was a day late. That couple with twins got it.

**NATASA:** You are always late. Unless its asked of you to be late.  
Such a shame they got both condos on the ground floor.

**BORIS:** They bought the smaller one for their boys.

**NATASA:** We could have bought that place for our daughter.

**BORIS:** Why? She is seriously in love with that American guy. I think after graduation they will get married, and stay in NY.

**NATASA:** If she had her own place here in Zagreb, it might be more reason to come back.

**BORIS:** We didn't send her off to study abroad so that she can just come back here.

**NATASA:** I am starting to regret that.

**BORIS:** You have Skype-You talk and see her almost every day.

**NATASA:** I can't hug her trough Skype

(Lights zoom in on Zdravko and Anita. Anita is an attractive young woman, 5 months pregnant)

**ZDRAVKO:** Huh Baby Cheeks? What a mansion eh? And our Penthouse??

**ANITA:** I've begged you NOT to call me Baby cheeks. It's irritating, and it reminds me I'm 25 years younger then you.

**ZDRAVKO:** I'm sorry.

**ANITA:** And to be honest, I had imagined this house somewhat different.

**ZDRAVKO:** Different how?

**ANITA:** On the video simulator, it seemed somehow much warmer.

**ZDRAVKO:** What's missing? It's got everything.

**ANITA:** I didn't say anything was missing, I just said I imagined it differently.

**ZDRAVKO:** Well, if you don't like it, we won't bother moving in. I'll buy us another condo and sell this one.

**ANITA:** Oh stop this nonsense. I'm giving birth in 4 months.

(Lights "zoom" in on Albert)

**ALBERT:** There, when I see those marital couples bickering, I know it's good I live alone and it affirms my choice of staying a bachelor. When I return from the hospital, after my 2-3 scheduled surgeries, on my feet, all I desire is peace and quite. Sometimes I play music on very low volume, some jazz or classical.

I will have peace in this house. The condo is perfect. It's "Fresh meat" will relax very quickly in these new surrounding...new building....it's nice to move into a place without a past, without a story of the people who lived there before us, who suffered or even perhaps died.

(Natasa and Boris approach Albert)

**BORIS:** Excuse me, are you one of our neighbors?

**ALBERT:** Yes, right above you.

**BORIS:** Aha, so we are right below you. I'm Boris

**ALBERT:** I'm Albert

(Hands shake)

**BORIS:** And this is my wife.

(Natasa extends a hand, Alberts accepts the handshake. They share a meaningful look)

**NATASA:** Natasa!

**ALBERT:** My pleasure.

**BORIS:** It's beautiful house, isn't it?

**ALBERT:** Stunning indeed, but it seems the water pressure is somewhat weak.

**NATASA:** Oh, so you noticed it too? (To Boris) See, I told you.

**BORIS:** Oh they'll take care of it, I'm sure.

**NATASA:** Sure they will...it's always a problem with housing on the hills.

Scene 1.

(Dubravka is home with her sons Davor and Toni. Davor is seated, reading a book, and Toni is surfing on the computer. Dubravka is critically observing Toni)

**DUBRAVKA:** And.....what have you got to say to that?

**TONI:** Nothing.

**DUBRAVKA:** Nothing at all?

**TONI:** And what am I suppose to say? Bitch?

**DUBRAVKA:** So it's the professor's fault?

**TONI:** If it were me in her shoes, I wouldn't have made the same conclusion.

**DUBRAVKA:** OH? And what conclusion would you have made?

**TONI:** I would have given me a D

(VIKTOR ENTERS)

**VIKTOR:** Hello everybody!

**DAVOR:** Hi!

**DUBRAVKA:** HI.

**VIKTOR:** I'm tired as a dog. I worked a double load.

**DUBRAVKA:** Look!

(Hands him a piece of paper)

**VIKTOR:** What's this this?

**DUBRAVKA:** You can read...A letter from the school.

(Viktor reads the paper and turns to Toni)

**VIKTOR:** You moron, you idiot, how could you?! At the end of your senior year, when all your friends are getting ready for SAT's, you pull this one??

(Toni stays silent)

**VIKTOR:** You really are an idiot. Only an idiot has to do summer school.

And in what subject none-the-less? Croatian. Only a cretin can do that. Croatian isn't even a subject, it's practically a hobby. Is it such a chore to read 10 books in a year and remember which character is the hero and which one is the bad guy?

**TONI:** That's not the problem.

**VIKTOR:** And what IS your problem?

**TONI:** Grammar. I Hate Grammar!

**VIKTOR:** If you had said something in the past, we could have gotten you tutoring lessons, and you could have pulled off a D!

**TONI:** It's just not my thing.

**VIKTOR:** You are a real moron, who apart from that computer of yours, knows nothing. All you do is play video games and surf the internet. No wonder your brain atrophied.... Your brother has a 4.0 and you are doing summer school and failing classes. Your brother is starting The School Of Economics in London, and you might not even graduate high school this year.

(Toni is silent)

**VIKTOR:** What do you say to all this?

**DUBRAVKA:** A catastrophe! I am so disappointed and ashamed. What am I suppose to say to all my friends?

**VIKTOR:** Don't say anything to anyone. This is a shameful family secret. Nobody in this family ever did Summer School! 5 generations back, nobody!!!

**DUBRAVKA:** When I saw this today, I couldn't eat lunch.

**VIKTOR:** Well, at least something useful came from this crap.

**DUBRAVKA:** With grades like these, what University can he even apply to?

**VIKTOR:** He'd be lucky if he can get a teacher's degree.

**DUBRAVKA:** In what subject mind you?

**VIKTOR:** I do believe Geography is the most lenient .

**TONI:** Why would I wanna do that?

**VIKTOR:** You have to get some degree. Besides, your mother and I both worked as teachers in elementary school. Even if you manage to get a teacher's degree, it will be a miracle if you can get a job in the elementary school.

**TONI:** That's just not for me.

**VIKTOR:** You have a better idea?

**TONI:** NOPE.

**VIKTOR:** Then College it is. Just pass the summer school first and graduate please.

(Viktor sighs)

**VIKTOR:** You ruined my afternoon, but I won't allow you to ruin my life..... 3 days ago when we moved into this beautiful new home, I was so happy. 20 years it took for us to rise from the bottom, from poverty and renting and penny pinching. For my first copy-ing store I borrowed money from 8 friends, and today we have the most advanced and modern printing store that

employes 10 people. And my son isn't capable of even passing Croatian with a D. You ruined everything, everything!

**TONI:** Can I go to my apartment now please?

**VIKTOR:** Go so I don't have to look at you.

(Toni exits)

**VIKTOR:** You've got to help your brother

**DAVOR:** He really isn't cut out for Grammar.

**VIKTOR:** For a D, even an imbecile can learn, if he tries.

## Scene 2.

(We find Dubravka, Natasa, and Anita in conversation)

**NATASA:** In this country everybody whines there are no jobs to be found, and yet when one needs the stairs swept, no one is to be found.

**ANITA:** How much does it pay to do that anyway?

**NATASA:** Cleaning fees are 40-50 Kunas an hour, and gardening 50-70.

**DUBRAVKA:** It's a great idea to hire one maid and a gardner we all can share.

**NATASA:** Well, it only makes sense, rather then each one of us having to look separately.

**DUBRAVKA:** What was the name of your hair salon again?

**NATASA:** "Blondie"

**DUBRAVKA:** What are their prices like?

**NATASA:** Last time I went a cut and color was 800 Kunas.

**DUBRAVKA:** Wow.

**ANITA:** Not that much.

**DUBRAVKA:** Hold on a second, that's more then a 100Euros.

**ANITA:** My salon charges a thousand every time I come. But they are phenomenal, and every third visit, it's free.

**DUBRAVKA:** That's because you used to be a TV personality. They love celebrities as customers. Why did you leave that job and became a public speaker?

**ANITA:** Being a TV Host was so boring. I am amazed I lasted 7 years. Besides it was a very underpaid job. As a public speaker, I'm getting paid 3 times as much.

**DUBRAVKA:** Well naturally, since you work for your husband.

**ANITA:** When I came to work for him, he was not my husband yet, we weren't even dating. He was still married.... After the Safari in Tanzania, we became a couple.

(Kata enters)

**NATASA:** Good Afternoon!

**DUBRAVKA:** Cleaning or gardening?

**KATA:** Cleaning.

**NATASA:** I assume you have experience already?

**KATA:** I've been doing this my whole life. I raised and sent 3 kids to school with it.

**NATASA:** How much do you charge per hour?

**KATA:** My last employer gave me 45 Kunas an hour.

**DUBRAVKA:** We've decided to pay 40 Kunas.

**KATA:** I'm ok with 40. My youngest daughter, just graduated college last fall and got a job, so I no longer have to support her.

**ANITA:** It's very important to us that you are around in the summer as well. No sudden seaside vacations, or seasonal work in some Hotel on the coast.

**KATA:** No worries, I don't go anywhere during the summer. My only obligation is every Spring and Fall I go on a pilgrimage in Medjugorje and Marija Bistrica.

**NATASA:** Do you really have to?

**KATA:** Yes. I made a vow to Mother Mary when my husband got sick.

**NATASA:** You have a husband...is he still alive?

**KATA:** Alive and well thank God. He was really sick for 2 years.

**DUBRAVKA:** How long are these pilgrimages?

**KATA:** MARIJA BISTRICA is only 2 days, and Medjugorje, with traveling it takes a week.  
(Marina enters, Kata withdraws in the background)

**MARINA:** Good Afternoon!

**NATASA:** Afternoon. And you are?

**MARINA:** Marina. I am here for the gardening appointment.

**NATASA:** Did you get a chance to see the surroundings?

**ANITA:** And the terrace and the Penthouse?

**MARINA:** I did.

**DUBRAVKA:** And what do you think? Did the people from "Zrinjevac" do a good job?

**MARINA:** Not bad for sure.

**DUBRAVKA:** We need someone for regular upkeep, regular upkeep of the garden. I hope you are interested?

**MARINA:** That's why I am here.

**DUBRAVKA:** What school did you attend?

**MARINA:** What school?

**DUBRAVKA:** I was wondering if it's some agricultural school-it's rare to encounter a woman in this field, lets be honest it's more likely to encounter a man in this line of work.

**MARINA:** After high school I enrolled in school for gardening

**ANITA:** And where is that school?

**MARINA:** Maribor.

**ANITA:** Aha, so Maribor?

**MARINA:** Yes, there.

**ANITA:** Can you provide a paper of a clean criminal record?

**MARINA:** Criminal record?

**ANITA:** That's right. We don't want anybody who has had problems with the law entering our homes.

**MARINA:** If it's necessary I can provide that. I have never been in a courthouse, not even as a witness.

**NATASA:** How much do you charge per hour?

**MARINA:** 60 Kunas

**NATASA:** We decided not to go above 50.

**DUBRAVKA:** It's a nice amount of money.

**MARINA:** But my rate is 60.

**DUBRAVKA:** Well you think if over, or we will interview other candidates.

Scene 3.

(Brunch at tycoon Zdravko's penthouse. SL are all the women: Dubravka, Anita, and Natasa in "frozen mode", while SR are all the men Zdravko, Viktor, Boris and Albert. We encounter the men deep in conversation while Zdravko is showing off his trophy wall)

**ZDRAVKO:** This is Iberian goat or as others call it, Spanish Goat, lives in the Pyrenees and some in small enclaves in Spain and South France. Of the estimated 55,000 living in the Pyrenees, some 5000 are shot annually.

**VIKTOR:** Is it a male or female? It has horns.

**ZDRAVKO:** Males and females both have horns, only the female's are 20cm shorter than that of the male's.

**ALBERT:** In humans, male horns are longer than female's.

(Men share a laugh)

**BORIS:** You talk like that because you are not married. If you were, you wouldn't joke about men's "horns"

**VIKTOR:** Then you'd know they are the same length.

**ZDRAVKO:** When I was younger I loved other men's women, but now I hate when a woman mentions her husband or her kids. I have no empathy for her feelings, or excuses for their guilt. If they agreed to have sex, I could care less about their reasoning.

**ALBERT:** It's unavoidable though. A guilty conscious is their favorite ingredient for infidelity..... And where did you catch this one? Spain or France?

**ZDRAVKO:** Spain. You guys must come with me hunting once.

**BORIS:** I haven't held a gun in my hand since the army. I am not sure I'd still be capable of it.

**ZDRAVKO:** Oh please, I'd arrange one weekend of training. There's no better relaxation than going hunting in Spain or on Safari in Africa. Best hunting was always on Safari.

**VIKTOR:** "Hunting" meaning animals?

**ZDRAVKO:** I meant women. Although what is the difference between animals or women when it comes to hunting? (Zdravko laughs)

**ZDRAVKO:** When women come to Africa, and find themselves in a hunting camp, in a tent, they feel so helpless, and vulnerable. The mere thought that a lion could show up at any moment, they literally shit themselves. In that moment men become as we used to be in the past, real protectors. The only thing to lean on. They run into our arms, and our beds on their own. From fear, that's how I caught my wife now, and the one before. You really have to join me in Africa.

**VIKTOR:** Thanks for the invitation but in Summer I'd rather be on the coast, swimming, drinking a beer in the shade, then sweating in 120 degree heat.

**ZDRAVKO:** Sweating? That's just bad propaganda. I hunt in Namibia and the South African Republic, and the climate there is dry. No Malaria, no Cholera, no viruses or bacteria. It can be more comfortable than some European countries. We also taught our hosts to grill our fish the Dalmatian way.

**BORIS:** How complicated is it... I mean the travel?

**ZDRAVKO:** You start at Zagreb airport in the afternoon, fly to Frankfurt, then continue from Frankfurt in the evening towards Johannesburg, and early morning their time you have arrived. Papers at their airports are so simple, it's a well rehearsed play, we have less problems bringing in weapons and hunting gear in some African countries, then importing a bottle of perfume in a European country.

We are greeted by the hunting company owner at the airport, and we are off hunting that same day. If you are all free next month, let's go.

**BORIS:** But your wife is pregnant.

**ZDRAVKO:** So what? She feels great. Two weeks ago we went to Paris. She is having a boy. My first and second wife both gave birth to girls... I am finally going to have a son. That's what I've always wanted. It seems to me women who carry boys handle the pregnancy much better than women carrying girls.

**ALBERT:** You think? I wasn't aware there was a difference at all. Did you read about this anywhere? Is there a scientific article based on this subject?

**ZDRAVKO:** That conclusion I made based on my own personal experience.

**ALBERT:** Oh I see.

(Men "freeze" and we move to Women)

**DUBRAVKA:** I don't know why but ever since we moved into our new home, I am having trouble sleeping. I wake up with a slight headache every day, that's not even a real headache but a slight pressure. Right here and here (pointing to her head points)

**NATASA:** Maybe your blood pressure is high?

**DUBRAVKA:** No, it's normal. I measured it. It just doesn't stop. I don't know what to do. It's as if there are some bad radiation in underground water or something.

**ANITA:** Did you try changing the position of your bed? They say for best results head should always point north and feet south.

**DUBRAVKA:** I've tried every variation. Two days ago we tried just that option.

**ANITA:** What option?

**DUBRAVKA:** Well, head due north and feet south.

**ANITA:** And? Any difference?

**DUBRAVKA:** No. Everything is the same. Nothing helps.

**NATASA:** Take a pill.

**DUBRAVKA:** A pill helps for an hour or two, then it all comes back. Plus, I don't want to get used to pharmaceuticals.

**NATASA:** I couldn't do it without them. Especially since I've entered menopause.

**ANITA:** Already? You couldn't possibly? You aren't middle aged yet?!

**NATASA:** Thank you my dear for the compliments, but half of my girlfriends who are my generation are in the same boat already. But with a good pill everything is easier. No need to run from the pharmaceuticals.

**DUBRAVKA:** I've always been hesitant of Big Bad Pharma. Maybe all this is due to the stress caused by this big move, work pressures, one of our boys flying to London to test for the School of Economics, and it just all piled up. Thank God he passed.

**NATASA:** Oh I thought you didn't need the test. I thought over there all one needs is enough money for the tuition and that's that.

**DUBRAVKA:** The tuition sure is high, but you do have to take an entrance exam. Luckily our Davor has always been a straight A student, so he passed with flying colors.

**NATASA:** And when is he off to London?

**DUBRAVKA:** In a few days he is flying there to find a place to stay and get settled in, then he is returning to Zagreb. He's going to spend the summer on the coast.

(In the background our maid Kata enters with a tray of finger foods. In that moment the Men "unfreeze" as well, and now everyone is in communication)

**ZDRAVKO:** Oh there is our Kata with the delicacies. We have a premium Russian Caviar. Let's open up some champagne!

**DUBRAVKA:** I adore caviar!

**ALBERT:** I haven't had caviar in a long time. That was my late father's favorite treat.

Although, caviar isn't as popular as it used to be around these parts.

**ZDRAVKO:** Good food should never go out of style. I will never get sick of lamb or caviar.  
(everyone hovers over Kata who is serving caviar)

**ANITA:** What is that?

**KATA:** Caviar!

**ANITA:** I can tell that's caviar, but what kind of caviar?

**KATA:** Black caviar.

**ANITA:** Black caviar?

**KATA:** Yes, black.!

**ANITA:** Didn't I specifically ask for a red one to be served?

**KATA:** Mister Zdravko told me to buy the black one.

**ANITA:** But I don't eat the black one. I only eat the red one. The black one makes me sick, you should have remembered that by now, if you care about me and anything I say. But you don't listen to a word that comes out of my mouth. You pay better attention to your poker buddies than to your own wife!

**ZDRAVKO:** I am so sorry Baby Cheeks but this is the best caviar there is, and I...

**ANITA:** Didn't I tell you to STOP calling me that, and I am not interested in the story of that caviar. You can eat it yourself.

(Anita storms out of the room fuming)

**ZDRAVKO:** Pregnancy..... My first wife, when she was carrying, no problems at all. She worked in the office till the last day. Literally we drove her from the firm to the hospital to deliver. Same with my second wife, maybe 2 or 3 morning sickness incidents, but you never heard her raise her voice. This one though, hysterics. Terrifying. Spoiled brat!

This new generation, the difference between black and red caviar is like red and white wine, both sides can be good and bad.

**DUBRAVKA:** I don't care much if it's black or red as long as the eggs are large and that they, you know.....melt in my mouth.

#### Scene 4.

(In the dark we hear a man and a woman making love. We do not know who the participants are. Passionate breathing leading towards a mutual climax. Seconds after the lights go on, we see Anita, her back towards us, getting dressed, while young Davor is stretching on the bed)

**ANITA:** C'mon, get dressed.

**DAVOR:** Where's the fire?

**ANITA:** My husband is due home in 30 min. I don't think it would be very a nice welcome, for him to find us like this.

**DAVOR:** You know, when I was in elementary school, you were hosting that musical tv show. The Zagreb Times, New Years edition, they published a two page poster of you, and I had that poster on the door of my room...If someone had told me back then, that one day, you and I...I would have thought them insane, certifiable...impossible.

**ANITA:** Was that the poster where I wore above the knee leather boots on the motorcycle?

**DAVOR:** That's the one! You looked so sexy.

**ANITA:** I'm not sexy now?

**DAVOR:** Of course you are, but the stomach ..

**ANITA:** You can't even tell I have a stomach from the back.

**DAVOR:** True, from the back you are a 10...I had no idea pregnant woman could be so...so...

**ANITA:** Say it...

**DAVOR:** I'm embarrassed..

**ANITA:** So horny?

**DAVOR:** Yes, that's it!

**ANITA:** Apparently most pregnant women lose the desire to have sex. They can't even imagine having to make love. But about 20 percent, the desire for sex doubles.... Unfortunately I belong to that bracket.

**DAVOR:** Why unfortunately? According to your moaning you enjoyed it immensely.

**ANITA:** Yes, I did... But it's much harder for a pregnant woman to satisfy that need.... With my husband it's practically impossible.

**DAVOR:** Why?

**ANITA:** Oh well, his whole life he dreamed of having a son. Since he found out I am carrying a boy, he's been fascinated with that fact. And since my stomach is visible...he won't even come near me. Lost the desire, completely.. I can tell it doesn't even occur to him that I might be having those kinds of needs.

**DAVOR:** Why not tell him?

**ANITA:** Why not tell him?

**DAVOR:** Yeah. Why not tell him you want to have sex?

**ANITA:** Have you lost your mind? Tell him, so he thinks I am some horny slut? He would lose all respect towards me.

**DAVOR:** But this way you have to cheat on him.

**ANITA:** But he doesn't know that. In his eyes, I am the virgin expectant mother of his future son.

And with you I can be the horny slut. You don't mind. I hope not?

**DAVOR:** Why would I mind, it's just.....

**ANITA:** Just what?

**DAVOR:** After you give birth, I hope you won't forget about me.

(Anita approaches him and runs her fingers through his hair)

**ANITA:** I have no idea what I'll be feeling, thinking, but I have a feeling I will still like you very much... plus we need to see how you will look at me..Maybe without the stomach I won't be as attractive to you any more.

**DAVOR:** Don't you worry about that, just find those high leather boots from 5 years ago.

Scene 5.

(In Boris and Natasa's Condo)

**BORIS:** I don't know what to think..... I just don't think we should make rash decisions. We hardly know the man. We need to think this trough.

**NATASA:** I don't see where the problem is.

**BORIS:** The problem is, both of us are professors at the University of LAW, the problem is you and I should be aware of the circles we find ourselves in.... before you know it some papers sooner or later will publish a photograph of us in his company. You know how media is.....and what his public rating is. His name is in all these affairs and murky business waters. Remember the rumors about how he obtained that hotel? And if we are not careful, one minute our photo is on Facebook, and from Facebook straight to front page of some news paper.

**NATASA:** He is our neighbor. He lives in our building, or better yet, we live in his building, because his condo is twice the size of ours)

The man invited us to the safari, all paid for, everyone is coming, and you are creating problems where there are none, and you are contemplating refusing such an opportunity.

**BORIS:** That's just it, that's the main problem, him wanting to pay for everything. Our travel, our stay there, even the animals I might shoot over there.....

and then tomorrow when he "politely" asks one of us to pull our strings at court for him, or look the other way on final judges exam for one of his cousins or mistresses, or worse, if it ever came to a case in front of a grand jury or a trial, and two of us are on the panel and....

**NATASA:** Maybe you are right.... I got carried away with the desire of finally seeing Africa.... experience that place, that wilderness, safari..

(Door Bell)

**BORIS::** Come on in!

(Viktor and Dubravka enter)

**VIKTOR:** Good Evening.

**BORIS:** Hey, I was starting to think you weren't coming.

**VIKTOR:** Sorry I had a rough day. Tomorrow is our deadline to deliver a 100.000 copies of paperwork for Department of Justice, and the copy machine had a hiccup.... Apologies.

**BORIS:** And did it work?

**VIKTOR:** Sure, sure. Everything is fine. In the end everything always works itself out, but the nerves kill you in the process. Others mess up and then I'm the one who always has to put out the fire.

**NATASA:** That's the price you pay when you work with people.

**VIKTOR:** So, are we going to Africa or not?

**DUBRAVKA:** Viktor told me you haven't decided yet, and we are of the opinion that the trip only makes sense if all of us are on board. That's how Zdravko had it in mind anyhow. Just as people get to know each other in team building and retreat weekends, he would like for us all to get to know each other, all of us who live in this building.

**NATASA:** That offer came so fast though..... I'm not sure what to do.

**DUBRAVKA:** It would be stupid to turn down such a wonderful opportunity laid out right in front of us.

**NATASA:** I thought the same , yes, but Boris is.... he thinks.... actually he is not sure that he can leave for 10 days and have everything organized and running smoothly at work.

**VIKTOR:** Oh c'mon, don't complicate life people, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to have an amazing time, and for all of us to really get to know each other... and I am convinced

that Zdravko will also take along some of his successful business associates and partners... And in circumstances like these, business relationships and deals that would never happen in a regular office are made. Those contacts might come in really useful one day. I am baffled that you are hesitating.

**BORIS:** That's just it, see when....

(Door Bell)

**NATASA:** Who could that be?

(Enters Albert)

**ALBERT:** Sorry I am late, surgery complications, patient barely made it.

**BORIS:** No problem, everyone is late tonight... And, did everything turn out alright?

**ALBERT:** Thank God, everything is fine. Patient is stabilized. Just spoke to the main nurse 5 minutes ago, everything seems to be under control....

So then, are we going to the Safari?

**BORIS:** So you have decided?

**ALBERT:** Of course! Isn't this why you've asked me here to discuss final details?

**VIKTOR:** Oh that's very exciting. We are going too. We need the escape from all the mundane every day life worries and jobs. Only Boris and Natasa are still deciding.

**ALBERT:** What seems to be the problem? This is a unique opportunity to experience something new and special?!

**NATASA:** So you are definitely going?

**ALBERT:** Yes! I thought we were all going, I wasn't going to let the gang down.

**NATASA:** Then we should go too.

**BORIS:** I know guys, but..... Listen , I find it a little strange, the timing of it all. He is inviting us to go on Safari when his wife in her last trimester. I am not convinced that's such a good thing for her, the danger of it all.

**NATASA:** The best thing a pregnant woman can do is act normal, to live the way she would as if she wasn't pregnant. That being said, only if the pregnancy is normal.

**BORIS:** But this is wilderness, Africa, Safari, hunting!!

**VIKTOR:** Stop with the wilderness talk. We will be in air-conditioned apartments with hot running water. Even the tents are not going to be ghetto, but like the ones Moamer el Gadafi lived in.

**DUBRAVKA:** Like our wellness spa. I wouldn't be surprised if in our tents we find a relaxation room with Himalayan salt bricks and LED lighting.

**ALBERT:** You would like what? In the middle of Africa, a jacuzzi with an ice fountain and Swedish sauna?

**DUBRAVKA:** You'll see, it's not at all like in times of Hemingway—nowadays these Safari's are total jet set. Zdravko is a hedonist, he would not have invited us if he wasn't 100% sure that we all, including him, are gonna have an amazing time.

**ALBERT:** Don't tell me he is inviting us cause of some romanticism , or eroticism or adventures? Or all together????

**BORIS:** And you? Are you coming on your own or are you inviting some widow or schoolmaster?

**ALBERT:** Well haven't decided yet. I might just go on my own.

**BORIS:** So you still haven't decided which one you, like better?

**NATASA:** What are you two talking about?

**BORIS:** Albert has been seeing two women simultaneously for a while now. A widow and a schoolmaster, and he can't make up his mind which one he likes better.

**NATASA:** And he discussed that with you?

**BORIS:** Sure, Viktor and me... in our local cafe.

**VIKTOR:** My advice was to keep dating both. He said both are quality women, why make one of them unhappy..This way both are happy, and he with them.

**BORIS:** That's a good one. Nowadays is hard to come by ONE good woman, let alone two!

**NATASA:** You are disgusting! You men are really disgusting when you talk about women.

**BORIS:** Why? We are just being honest.

**NATASA:** C'mon! You are behaving like primitive pubescent boys. Gross!You make me sick. This male talks are so tasteless, bordering chauvinistic self praise.

**BORIS:** Women share even more details then men do.

**NATASA:** But never at your expense. I've lost respect for you all.

**ALBERT:** Wait, me too?

**NATASA:** You especially..... what makes a smart man ashamed, the idiot wears with pride.

**BORIS:**Natasa, how can you insult our guest like that?

**NATASA:** And how can he insult women?

**BORIS:** I won't allow you to....

**NATASA:** Oh please spare me with defending him.If there is something I loathe from the bottom of my soul, it's male solidarity and loyalty. When a man shows off his conquests, he is only making his emotional emptiness known.

**BORIS:** What in the world are you talking about? The man didn't show off anything..Three of us had a little too much to drink, and Albert opened up about a dilemma he was facing, dating two women, he is attracted to both and can't make up his mind..... and you twisted it all around.

**NATASA:** You've known each other less then a month, and already sharing stories like you've known each other since grade school.

**ALBERT:** Obviously I made a mistake that evening. If I had know it would eventually come back to you, and hurt you like this, I never would have done it.

(Natasa and Albert share a look)

**NATASA:** Are you being serious or ironic right now?

**ALBERT:** Dead Serious.

**NATASA:** Fuck off.

**BORIS:** Natasa how could you?

(Natasa storms out and slams the door. An awkward moment among the guests)

**BORIS:** I'm so sorry Albert, I have no idea what's gotten into her. So sorry.

**ALBERT:** Oh please Boris, no need to apologize at all...I find it adorable when women are mad. It's a proof they are human after all, not robots.

## Scene 6.

(Toni is at the computer, surfing the net. Davor enters his room)

**DAVOR:** Hey!

**TONI:** Hey, where were you?

**DAVOR:** Croatia Airlines. I got a discounted airfare.

**TONI:** Didn't you say this time of year there are no discounts on airfares to London?

**DAVOR:** That's what they said last time, but somehow they managed to fish out this new Malaysian airline. They only fly on Thursdays, they have some kind of promotion going on this month only.

**TONI:** Oh I see...

**DAVOR:** Congratulations.

**TONI:** What for?

**DAVOR:** Mom said you passed Summer school.

**TONI:** OH that, I knew they were gonna let me through. They didn't wanna be bothered with me another year.

**DAVOR:** Regardless, Congrats!

(Silence)

**DAVOR:** Hey listen.....

**TONI:** What?

**DAVOR:** One of my friends got himself in a bit of a trouble.

**TONI:** What kind of trouble?

**DAVOR:** He fell in love with a married woman.

**TONI:** And how old is he?

**DAVOR:** 19, like you and I.

**TONI:** And her?

**DAVOR:** 11 years older... 30

**TONI:** Why does he want a MILF?

**DAVOR:** She is smoking hot.....he says.

**TONI:** OK well if she is, what's the problem then..?

**DAVOR:** He is in love.

**TONI:** Who?

**DAVOR:** Well, him, friend of mine.

**TONI:** It happens.... what about her?

**DAVOR:** He thinks she is in it just for the sex.

**TONI:** That's not such a bad scenario, especially if both are enjoying themselves.

**DAVOR:** Let's say you were with a married woman

**TONI:** Yes?

**DAVOR:** And she asks you to have sex with her while pregnant, what would you do?

**TONI:** I don't think I could do it with a pregnant woman.

**DAVOR:** Why not?

**TONI:** How do I even get it on with her with a stomach?

**DAVOR:** Well from the back...

**TONI:** Oh I see, I guess I could do that.. If I wanted to... If I had the desire.

**DAVOR:** What do you mean, "If I wanted to"?

**TONI:** I'm not sure if I could get it up with a pregnant woman..I mean it's a little scary after all.

**DAVOR:** Why?

**TONI:** Well, cause of the baby..

**DAVOR:** But pregnant women can also be sexually attractive and erotic.

**TONI:** You think?

**DAVOR:** I'm pretty sure.

**TONI:** I find that somewhat gross. I don't think I could ever do it with a pregnant woman. I'm pretty convinced she wouldn't turn me on. I think her stomach would be a total turn off, you know?

**DAVOR:** But he likes her just like that.

**TONI:** So where is the problem?

**DAVOR:** She has a husband.

**TONI:** Does the husband know?

**DAVOR:** He doesn't.

**TONI:** That's great for him then.

**DAVOR:** Yes it is.

(Silence)

**DAVOR:** What would you do if you were in his shoes?

**TONI:** What do you mean what would I do?

**DAVOR:** Well what would you do... if you fell in love with a gorgeous married woman, she is pregnant and she is about to give birth to her husband's baby.

**TONI:** What would I do?

**DAVOR:** Yes, what would you do?

**TONI:** Well, I'd wait for her to give birth.

**DAVOR:** You'd wait for her to give birth?

**TONI:** That's right.

**DAVOR:** And then?

**TONI:** What then?

**DAVOR:** What would you do after the birth?

**TONI:** Why are you asking me this? What are you really interested in?

**DAVOR:** Would you admit the truth to her if you were in his place?

**TONI:** Admit to what truth?

**DAVOR:** That you love her?!

**TONI:** If I loved her, yes I would tell her. But what is she supposed to do with her baby and her husband?

**DAVOR:** That's what I've been wondering.... I mean that's what I told him, my friend, too. I asked him: what is she supposed to do with her baby and the husband... so...

**TONI:** I wouldn't be able to stop thinking about it.

**DAVOR:** About what?

**TONI:** Well about that fact that the woman I love has a husband and every night climbs into bed with him... having a mistress must be awful. It's the equivalent of a man wearing another man's shirt-a shirt someone else wore and then never washed it.

**DAVOR:** You think?

**TONI:** I do....All the folks who have lovers and mistresses are in a way a little dirty.

**DAVOR:** How do you mean dirty?

**TONI:** They live their life like the coo coo bird.

**DAVOR:** what do you mean coo coo bird?

**TONI:** The one that lays her eggs in another birds nest and flies away.

**DAVOR:** Oh that.

(Silence)

**DAVOR:** So what advice would you give my friend?

**TONI:** I would advise him not to get involved with other men's wives.'

**DAVOR:** Easier said than done. He is in love. He loves her.. don't you get it?

**TONI:** Well he shouldn't have gotten involved in the first place, if he knew she had a husband and was pregnant. Did he know all that?

**DAVOR:** Yes he did.

**TONI:** Then he got himself into that mess. If he hadn't started anything, there would be no problems.

**DAVOR:** It's easy looking in hindsight. He would love to turn the clock back and not have started anything...But he loves her and he can't change that.

**TONI:** Then they will both suffer. Or perhaps just him.

**DAVOR:** You think?

**TONI:** Guaranteed.

### Scene 7.

(Kata is sweeping with a broom on a terrace. Gardner Marina shows up)

**MARINA:** Hey!

**KATA:** Hello.

**MARINA:** Everything is overgrown.... I can't remember this much rain in the beginning of summer.

**KATA:** Thank God, today sure is a beautiful Day.

**MARINA:**Who is home of the "Bosses"?

**KATA:** Nobody.

**MARINA:** What do you mean nobody?

**KATA:** Everybody left with Mr Zdravko to Africa on a Safari. Little Davor went to London, his brother Toni is here in Zagreb, but he went to apply for the University.

**MARINA:** You can't possibly mean that Anita went to Africa on a Safari? She is 7 months pregnant??

**KATA:** Not in Africa...She flew to London.

**MARINA:** London? What is a pregnant woman doing in London?

**KATA:** She went to renew her wardrobe.

**MARINA:** She is out of her mind.

**KATA:** She said there is a shop in London for expectant mothers only. She wants to wear that type of clothing that hides the stomach. So people can't tell she is pregnant.

**MARINA:** Nonsense... At 7 months you can't hide it any longer.

**KATA:** A pregnant woman can look nice too. That's why she wanted to get dressed from the English store. It's a specialty store just for pregnant women.

**MARINA:** We have stores just like that here in Zagreb. She is nuts, at the end of the day she's gonna go into labor while flying. You do know take off and landings are dangerous for pregnant women.

**KATA:** Really? Why?

**MARINA:** The air

pressure...in some cases during take off or landing, women have gone into labor... or have had a miscarriage.

**KATA:** If I had known, I would have warned Mrs. Anita.

**MARINA:** She wouldn't have listened to you anyway.

**KATA:** You don't think so?

**MARINA:** She always does whatever she wants. Everyone in this place is totally loony.

**KATA:** Why would you say that?

**MARINA:** Do you find it normal that a man who's wife is 7 months pregnant goes on Safari in Africa? You find it normal that a pregnant woman is prancing around London shopping? That PHD Law Professors go to a shooting range, that people who own a printing company, and employ 10 people, just pick up and leave everything and fly away to Africa?? They are all lunatics. Drunk lunatics!

**KATA:** Maybe you shouldn't judge them like that. They have their own worries and problems. They also need some R&R.

**MARINA:** I'd like to have some of their worries and their problems. But they wouldn't want any of mine. I'm telling you, they are all drunk, and in that drunken world, they do stupid things. And you know what they got drunk on?

**KATA:** What?

**MARINA:** Money! They are all intoxicated with money! They think they are worth more than the rest of us, because they have more money, and that they are entitled to everything that is not accessible to us.

**KATA:** I would never trade places with any of them!

**MARINA:** Why not?

**KATA:** I like my own life.

**MARINA:** You say that because you don't know any better.

**KATA:** I have everything I need. My husband is good, my kids turned out fine, there's a grandchild on the way...What else do I need?

**MARINA:** You need someone who can sweep your terrace, instead of you sweeping someone else's.

**KATA:** And what would I do all day?

**MARINA:** You'd enjoy your own life for once.

**KATA:** That's not for me...Besides, I like my life the way it is, I've got no problems.

**MARINA:** You have no problems?

**KATA:** Nope.

**MARINA:** And you are happy with your life?

**KATA:** Thank God, I am.

**MARINA:** You are totally crazy!

**KATA:** Why?

**MARINA:** Just because.

**KATA:** I don't understand.

**MARINA:** Does somebody have to spell out what your life is really like?

**KATA:** What's it like?

**MARINA:** Desperate, terrible and pathetic!

**KATA:** Where do you get that from? I have a good job, my husband is healthy, all my kids have a job, my fridge is full, tonight my favorite tv show is on, the rain stopped, the sun is out again.. My life could not get any better than it is right now.

**MARINA:** Hold on a minute... Do you really believe everything you've just said?

**KATA:** Well... I wouldn't say it if I didn't believe it. I don't see anything I'm missing. I have everything I need.

(Silence)

**MARINA:** You really wouldn't rather be on Safari right now in Africa, flying on planes, spending weekends in a wellness spa, taking a Holiday on the coast in a 5 star Hotel, putting your feet up, and letting someone else clean your apartment, your house.. and not you cleaning like this.... Don't you ever wish for that?

**KATA:** That's not for me.

**MARINA:** Why not?

**KATA:** I'm just not used to that kind of a lifestyle.

**MARINA:** A person gets used to good things easily.

**KATA:** Well, I think everybody should be where God put them, and they should be happy and grateful for everything they have and are doing.

**MARINA:** To be grateful for being a maid?

**KATA:** Of course. Imagine if I was unemployed??

**MARINA:** You have lost your mind.

**KATA:** Why?

**MARINA:** Just because... One really can't have a conversation with you about life.

**KATA:** Why not?

**MARINA:** Because you refuse to see things as they really are.

**KATA:** And what are things really like?

**MARINA:** Terrible, horrific, that's what they are like.

**KATA:** You don't really mean that.

**MARINA:** You know what? You are driving me crazy. Sometimes you annoy me more then our nouveau riche employers.

**KATA:** Why? What on earth have I done?

**MARINA:** I just can't..! Fuck you, and your Life's optimism! A person can't even have a normal heart to heart with you.

**KATA:** I'm sorry.

**MARINA:** There you go...Now you are even apologizing. Why are you apologizing?

**KATA:** I can see you are upset, so If I hurt you, I wanna apologize.

**MARINA:** You didn't hurt me, I hurt YOU, so don't apologize.

**KATA:** So why are you upset then?

**MARINA:** Because Im fucking sick of you and your fucking goodness-that's why!

**KATA:** Why are you cussing now?

**MARINA:** Listen, just shut up! Our conversation is finished, do you understand? Finished!

**KATA:** Ok, ok, just calm down.

**MARINA:** Nobody has ever agitated me the way you just have.

(Silence)

**KATA:** Why?

**MARINA:** Because a woman can't even have an argument with you.

**KATA:** Why should we argue?

**MARINA:** Fuck off!

Scene 8.

(Albert is sitting in his apartment, reading something from a tablet, and making notations into a notebook. He hears a doorbell.)

**ALBERT:** Come in!

(Natasa enters the apartment)

**NATASA:**Hi!

**ALBERT:** Hi!

**NATASA:** Am I interrupting?

**ALBERT:** Not at all. Please, come in.

**NATASA:** I can see the tablet...

**ALBERT:** Nothing too important, just making some notes..

**NATASA:** If I'm interrupting, I'll leave...

**ALBERT:** I can finish it later, no deadline here.

(Silence)

**ALBERT:** Tell me.... what's going on?

**NATASA:** Boris told me... you said to him you got that rash all over your arms.

**ALBERT:** I did.

**NATASA:** And that you are using some cream....

**ALBERT:** Twice a day- After my morning shower, and before I go to bed. I must have contracted it on that Safari.... some bugs made a nice meal out of me.

**NATASA:** I think I have the same thing.

**ALBERT:** No way!?

**NATASA:** Sure-Look!

(Natasa extends her arms towards him. He comes towards her and is observing her arms without touching them.)

**ALBERT:** Well, I'll be damned, the same as mine. Only yours is somewhat lighter reaction.

**NATASA:** Would you happen to have an extra cream?

**ALBERT:** As a matter of fact, I do... It's like I knew, I got two bottles.

**NATASA:** So in the morning, and in the evening.

**ALBERT:** That's correct. Lightly towel yourself dry after the shower. Don't rub. It will irritate the skin. Then apply the cream with a cotton ball, very gently dab, no rubbing. Take it.

(Natasa takes the cream from Albert)

**NATASA:** Thank you.

**ALBERT:** Don't mention it, and don't worry it goes away pretty fast. Two to three days. But even after the symptoms withdraw, continue applying the cream for a whole week.

(Silence)

**NATASA:** I find it stupid, you playing tennis, with my husband.

**ALBERT:** I have to play with someone and he loves tennis the way I do.

**NATASA:** I find it annoying...

**ALBERT:** What exactly?

**NATASA:** Your friendship.

**ALBERT:** That's your problem.

**NATASA:** Don't tempt me. If he ever found out, the problem would be yours....I would like it if you'd stop playing tennis with him, and stop confiding in him.

**ALBERT:** I have never in my entire life allowed anyone to tell me who to be friends with.

**NATASA:** It's just gross you confiding in him and being close to him.

**ALBERT:** If I didn't confide in him, you would never have found out about the rash I got, and you wouldn't have gotten the medicine for it just now.

**NATASA:** That Africa...I knew I was going to contract something in all that filth.

**ALBERT:** It's nothing, it will pass.

**NATASA:** You think?

**ALBERT:** Don't worry... We Europeans are just more sensitive to their insects, water, sun, pollen, smells...But not to worry. Don't let those mundane things ruin the memories of the Safari. We did have a great time.

(Silence)

**ALBERT:** I had a beautiful time. I assume you had a good time too?

**NATASA:** It was annoying having you there. And having to see you nine days in a row. It really got on my nerves.

**ALBERT:** I apologize, If I had known, I wouldn't have gone. You should have said something.

**NATASA:** I you hadn't gone, it would have irritated me even more.

(Silence)

**ALBERT:** Damned if I do and damned if I don't.. So I was wrong no matter what I did....? Is that the conclusion? Is it?

**NATASA:** True! With you everything always was and remained wrong. Everything you ever did with me was and remained a mistake.... since the day I met you in that hospital cafeteria.

**ALBERT:** Day before I graduated college.

**NATASA:** True...the day before your graduation is when we met. I wish that day never happened, ever! That was our first mistake. But the biggest one of all was you moving into this house! Why did you buy this Condo?? Why did you after, 15 years, enter into my shitty life? Why? I almost fainted when I saw you, when we "met" in front of my husband. I was horrified when I saw that you lived in this house.

**ALBERT:** I thought you would have been glad, that you wanted it.

**NATASA:** That I wanted it? Based on what?

**ALBERT:** When we ran into each other on the street this last spring, after all this time, and I invited you for a drink, you couldn't stop talking about this dream house, the most beautiful house. Three times you mentioned they still had one empty apartment, and three times you mentioned the name of the construction company that built it. I remembered the name. And when we parted ways, I found their number and the next day I made an offer. I was convinced it's what you wanted, that you'd be ecstatic when you found out I bought the place.

**NATASA:** You were convinced I'd be ecstatic?

**ALBERT:** Of course. I thought that's why you were talking about it non stop-to get me to buy it too.

**NATASA:** You have lost your mind. How could you even entertain the idea that I would want to see you here day-in and day-out, along with these two women that you are fucking, without any intention of marrying either of them, ever?? Do they know you will never pop the question, do they know they can't count on you and that they are just recreation for you, an athletic hobby? Do they know you don't love them? Do they know there is no future with you and that there will never be one?

**ALBERT:** Don't speak to me like that. You have no right!

**NATASA:** Why not? I only speak the truth. You don't have any intention of marrying either of them, do you?

**ALBERT:** True.

**NATASA:** Doesn't that prove that you are nothing but an emotionless, male chauvinistic pig, and that they got involved with the wrong man with whom they have no future?

**ALBERT:** You just laid out two statements, of which one is true and the other is not.

**NATASA:** And which one is true and which one is not?

**ALBERT:** It is true I have no intention of marrying either of them, however it is not true I am devoid of emotions. And you are the last person on earth who has a right to throw that in my face, the last!

**ALBERT:** Why?

**ALBERT:** Because I truly loved you... That year we were together.

**NATASA:** And then you broke-up with me, and dumped me!

**ALBERT:** I didn't break up with you, you broke up with me!

**NATASA:** Where did you get that from?

**ALBERT:** I asked for your hand in marriage... I proposed. Did you forget? You are the only woman I asked to marry me, the only one in my whole life! When I suggested you get a divorce, and marry me—you laughed mockingly. Like I just told the funniest joke. You never knew how much that laughter hurt me.

**NATASA:** What's the matter with you? I had a daughter in second grade, a husband who was finishing his PHD, and my mom who was dying.. You were a kid, 8 years younger than me, you couldn't possibly expect me to leave everything and...

**ALBERT:** I did. Yes, I did expect... In my naiveté I actually believed that you loved me too. At least that's what you were saying.

**NATASA:** You can't twist things like that.

**ALBERT:** And how was I supposed to behave towards you, huh? How? You talked about a husband towards whom you feel nothing, describing an emotional vastness that engulfs you. I loved you with all my heart. I was ready to accept your daughter, your whole life that comes with you. I asked you to marry me—and I received laughter. Ridicule. And you have the nerve to accuse me of being an emotionless lover who uses women. Believe me: No woman ever heard the words "I love you", cross my lips. Those words I only said to you... only you. So if there is something wrong with my emotions today, and my shitty life—it's all your fault. You are the culprit. After you refused my offer, I could not remain your lover. I hated you and your husband, and the mere thought of you climbing into a bed with him.... 3 years I never touched another woman. I lived in some delusional world, hoping that any moment now you will show up at my door with a suitcase in your hand, and tell me you can't live without me... But that never happened. That remained a foolish dream... And then one day, I realized I no longer have to wait, and that it makes no difference if my bed is empty or not, and it makes no difference who is in it. So please, do not accuse me of anything—if my life is an emotional emptiness—you are to blame, only you!

**NATASA:** I'm so sorry.... I didn't know... I'm sorry.

**ALBERT:** Now.. after all this time.. I don't need your apology. It's a little too late.

**NATASA:** Can I at least explain?

**ALBERT:** I'd rather you not. It doesn't matter any more. Please.... Please.... This is too difficult... Just leave me alone... I want to be alone.

(Natasa leaves the room without saying a word)

Scene 9.

(Penthouse terrace, we encounter Zdravko and Kata)

**KATA:** Should I open red or white wine?

**ZDRAVKO:** White. It goes better with this, just make sure it's always chilled. If one of the bottles is open for a long time, you bring it back to the fridge and replace it with a new chilled one.

**KATA:** How about we put out a bucket of ice, and we can keep the bottle in that.

**ZDRAVKO:** No way, that always seems like I'm in a hotel, I don't like that.

(Viktor and Dubravka enter)

**VIKTOR:** Bravo, congratulations!!

(Kisses on the cheeks with Zdravko)

**ZDRAVKO:** Thank you, thank you... I'm truly happy.

**DUBRAVKA:** We were so happy when we heard. Congratulations from the heart!

(Dubravka kisses on the cheeks with Zdravko)

**ZDRAVKO:** It's a boy, finally a son!

**DUBRAVKA:** How is Anita?

**ZDRAVKO:** Good—he weighs 8.7 oz and he is 20 inches long- a real man!

**DUBRAVKA:** That's nice.

**VIKTOR:** Main thing, everything turned out good.

**ZDRAVKO:** Labor lasted only 5 hours... Go ahead... eat! Kata!

(Kata is offering trays with glasses of wine, then she picks up wine from the table and pours it in the glasses.)

**VIKTOR:** That's enough to start with.

**DUBRAVKA:** Thank you!

**VIKTOR:** To the little one's health... Do we have a name yet?

**ZDRAVKO:** Marcel-Emanuel.

**VIKTOR:** Say that again?

**ZDRAVKO:** Marcel-Emanuel. I wanted Emanuel, Anita wanted Marcel, nobody was giving in, so....

**DUBRAVKA:** Nice name... I mean, nice names.

**VIKTOR:** To little Marcel's health

**ZDRAVKO:** Marcel-Emanuel.

**VIKTOR:** Yes, to his health!

**DUBRAVKA:** And to Anita's health!

(glasses clink)

**VIKTOR:** Cheers!

**ZDRAVKO:** Cheers!

**DUBRAVKA:** Cheers!

(Zdravko's cell phone rings)

**ZDRAVKO:** Excuse me!

(Zdravko moves away from the guests and answers his call, while Dubravka is asking Kata to pour more wine)

**ZDRAVKO:** Thank you, thank you buddy... a boy is a boy after all... I saw his pee pee.... 8.7oz, 20 inches long..... Good, she is good... I will convey...she'll be glad.... I'm so sorry

buddy, the neighbors are here to congratulate me.... yes indeed, third time is a charm.... ok, ciao.

(Zdravko returns to his guests)

**ZDRAVKO:** Her water broke when we were drinking coffee this morning...she thought she peed herself, and I said: “Woman today you are losing your status as a pregnant woman.. calling the ambulance now.”

**VIKTOR:** “Today you are losing the status as a pregnant woman?!”

**ZDRAVKO:** Yep, just like that!

(They all laugh. Albert joins the group)

**ALBERT:** Did the celebration start without me?

**ZDRAVKO:** Yes indeed, welcome!

(Albert comes towards Zdravko, hugs him, congratulates him)

**ALBERT:** Congratulations!

**ZDRAVKO:** Thank you.

**ALBERT:** How is Anita?

**ZDRAVKO:** Good.. Great!

**ALBERT:** And the little one?

**ZDRAVKO:** Even better...8.7 oz, 20 inches long.

**ALBERT:** Wow, huge baby.

**ZDRAVKO:** A big boy like his Dad. Here!

(Albert picks up a glass from the tray Kata is holding up)

**ALBERT:** Thank you.... Ok, to his health, Dad!

**ZDRAVKO:** To his health!

**ALBERT:** And what did you name him?

**ZDRAVKO:** Marcel-Emanuel...He will have two names.

**ALBERT:** Nice...So, soon we have a baby coming into our House.

**ZDRAVKO:** Yes indeed.

**ALBERT:** And how is business coming along? I haven't seen you much lately.

**VIKTOR:** Terrific!.. As a matter of fact, never better. We have so many orders we are contemplating hiring 5 more people.

**ZDRAVKO:** 5 more? Your business really is thriving.

**VIKTOR:** We are getting two more printing machines. We received a loan from a bank for small business owners. Hey that friend of yours from Safari got in touch with us... We are gonna work for him too.

**ZDRAVKO:** Oh that's wonderful.. I told you, the best business deals are made on Safari.

**DUBRAVKA:** And I decided to to open up an editorial section of our company, but only focusing on monographs and special edition prints.

**ZDRAVKO:** Painter's Monographs? Isn't that rather complicated and expensive? Don't all those prints have to be on that thick glossy paper?

**DUBRAVKA:** Of course.... the best quality. That's more for our rating, and for my soul. We will publish only 2 monographs a year. It's great for the image of the firm, papers write about it etc.

**ZDRAVKO:** And you know how to do all this? I mean run the editorial businesses?

**VIKTOR:** Of course she does. My wife was an Arts Major and a teacher in school. That is her first passion, once upon a time she even painted and drew.

**ZDRAVKO:** No way! I didn't know.

(Boris and Natasa enter)

**BORIS:** Is it a boy??

**ZDRAVKO:** It's a boy, it's a boy!

**BORIS:** Bravo!

**NATASA:** Congratulations.

**ZDRAVKO:** Thank you.

**BORIS:** We are so happy for you!

(Kissing)

**NATASA:** What did you name him?

**ZDRAVKO:** Marcel-Emanuel.

**NATASA:** Beautiful name.

**BORIS:** And which one is the first name?

**ZDRAVKO:** Both names are equal, but Marcel will be first.

**NATASA:** Why two names?

**ZDRAVKO:** Anita wanted Marcel, I suggested Emanuel, after my Grandad and then....

(Zdravko's cell rings)

**ZDRAVKO:** Apologies, I have to take this. Have a drink. Kata!

(Zdravko removes him self from the guests some 6 feet, while Kata serves drinks to Boris and Natasa)

**ZDRAVKO:** Hello?... yes.... didn't I tell you not to call me today, my wife gave birth... what problem.. what truck?... It wasn't supposed to go today, it was supposed to go tomorrow!.... You guys are bunch of morons! Call the Customs Office, ask for Zlatko, and have him call his boss. He is one of our men too.... Have them released in 30 min, or he'll deal with me personally..... You idiot, had you told me in time..... Then HE is an idiot, but it doesn't help the problem knowing which one of you is the bigger idiot. The most important thing is that everything gets solved in half an hour to stop anything being declared...Immediately!

(Zdravko returns among his guests)

**ZDRAVKO:** Kata, bring some appetizers so the wine doesn't just hit an empty stomach.

**KATA:** Coming....!

(Kata exits)

**NATASA:** How is Anita?

**ZDRAVKO:** She feels amazing.

**BORIS:** And the baby?

**ZDRAVKO:** 8.7 oz, and 20 inches long.

**BORIS:** Holy mackrel!

(Zdravko's cell rings again, he looks at caller ID)

**ZDRAVKO:** Folks, my wife is calling from the hospital!

**DUBRAVKA:** Please say hello!

**NATASA:** From us too!

**ZDRAVKO:** Hello sweetheart, how are you?.... All the neighbors are here, they say hello... we are celebrating the birth of the little one... Why isn't it ok? ..... Of course we will celebrate again when you return from the hospital..... Oh C'mon baby, its a perfectly normal custom..... It hurts? ...It will pass..... Stiches are itching?..... Want me to call the nurse, doctor?..... Who? ..... Shameful! He didn't say that did he?... I will call the hospital administration, no one has the right to deal with you like that...Calm down now, everything will be alright....please don't yell at me.....let me just explain.... please let me..... please allow me to explain....

(He hangs up the phone. Sighs deeply.Everyone is staring at him. Awkward moment)

**ZDRAVKO:** Anita says..... hello to everyone... she is happy we are all here like this.... says hello to everyone.

**VIKTOR:** That's nice.

**ALBERT:** The most important thing is that she is alright

**NATASA:** And we say hello.

## ACT II

### Scene 10.

(Penthouse terrace, there is a party going on. Two serving tables, one with appetizers, others with glasses and drinks. Next to the tables Kata is serving drinks to guests. Among the guests are Boris and Natasa, Viktor, Dubravka, and doctor Albert. In the middle we see tycoon Zdravko and his new 4th wife Iva who is 7 months pregnant. Iva is turning 28 so she seems like a lost child among middle-aged people. Zdravko has a glass in his hand and is giving a speech)

**ZDRAVKO:** Dear neighbors, dear friends, let me thank you for all the gifts. A 60th Birthday is nothing to sneeze at. You celebrate this only once in your life.

**VIKTOR:** I would give you 10 years less

**ZDRAVKO:** Thank you Viktor, I feel 20 years younger, but my ID unfortunately speaks the cruel truth about my "start date"...I would like to thank you all for the last 5 and half years of friendship and support. When I realize its already been 5and a half years since we all met, moved into this house, I realized how the time just flies. It's like I was born yesterday... and already 6 decades slipping away.... But my Birthday is just one reason for this gathering. The more important reason is my darling Iva. There you go, I finally found the love of my life in my 60th year..... she moved into this house yesterday, it was a real struggle ripping her out of her parents arms. And I am convinced that she will find in all of you, not only good neighbors but like I have, true friends. And in two months, the stork is going to knock on our door, we are receiving a new bundle of joy, so our house will echo with baby's laughter.

**BORIS:** Do you know if its boy or a girl?

**IVA:** it's a girl

**ZDRAVKO:** Girls are way more loyal then boys... I'm thrilled it's a girl.

**BORIS:** Do you have a name picked out yet?

**ZDRAVKO:** Elizabeth-Janja.

**IVA:** My grandmother was called Elizabeth.

**ZDRAVKO:** And mine Janja, so to keep everybody happy... right.... anyhow to finish up, welcome! I am glad to have you all here, and may these friendships last for another 100 years.. Cheers!

**EVERYBODY:** Cheers!

**VIKTOR:** Zdravko, you are a really good orator, you could go into politics.

**ZDRAVKO:** That's the last thing I need.... The media won't leave me alone lately. Have you read the crap in yesterday's papers?

**VIKTOR:** No! What?

**ZDRAVKO:** Well... they published a list of 10 politicians who did business with me in the last few years.

**BORIS:** I saw it...There are an even number of left and right wing politicians. 5 to 5.

**ZDRAVKO:** As if they are not allowed to do business with me, it's a free country, isn't it?

**VIKTOR:** It sure is.

**DUBRAVKA:** Our media is so unprofessional.

**NATASA:** So often incorrect and tedious.

**IVA:** Just last week the papers called me a starlet....Just imagine, me a starlet? And the fact that I have a degree in Traffic Culture, that I represented Croatia in Gymnastics twice, none of that was mentioned.

**ZDRAVKO:** Honey, that reporter will no longer be reporting anything, I already took care of it. He wasn't really a real reporter, just a vindictive scribbler. Journalism really hit rock bottom, hiring just about anybody! The so called Journalists, disastrous!

**BORIS:** Truly, rock bottom.....ON a happier note, we also are expecting a Stork bringing a baby into our home.

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

**BORIS:** An hour ago we talked with our daughter on Skype. She just returned from a West Coast Trip back to New York...she felt nauseous, thought it was hormonal. Went to see a doctor and it turns out she is pregnant.

**VIKTOR:** That's wonderful! Congratulations!

**ZDRAVKO:** Bravo!

**BORIS:** We are becoming Grandparents.

**ALBERT:** I'm having real difficulties imagining either of you as Grandparents....

**BORIS:** Well, I'm in a bit of a shock too, but.... we'll get used to it by the time baby arrives.

**DUBRAVKA:** So she patched everything up with the American?

**NATASA:** Well..... not exactly. That's still unresolved... His mother doesn't approve... anyhow, long story. It got a little complicated but I'm sure it will all sort itself out.

**DUBRAVKA:** The only thing that matters is that she is ok and the baby is healthy, the rest will come.

**BORIS:** True, everything will be ok... It just needs time.

**ZDRAVKO:** Let there be children, the more the better, here's to a demographic explosion in our house...To the New Generation!

(Zdravko raises his glass)

**EVERYONE:** Cheers!

**ZDRAVKO:** Listen, Viktor, where is your car? I haven't seen it in your spot for days now.

**VIKTOR:** At the mechanic. Some electric part died and they are waiting for the part from France.

**ZDRAVKO:** Oh I see..

**VIKTOR:** Yeah..

**ZDRAVKO:** It's better to buy a new one. As soon as a car starts breaking down, it's time to buy a new one.

**NATASA:** I'm convinced Iva will love it in this house.

**ALBERT:** "The House of Dreams" as Zdravko likes to say.

**ZDRAVKO:** It sure is.... The House of Dreams. That famous TV architect, the one that writes for Architectural Digest, said that our house is one of the most beautiful homes in all of Zagreb.They are going to include it in the next edition.

**BORIS:** Oh wow, that's good to know. That will raise our home value.

**DUBRAVKA:** And you two, where did you meet?

**IVA:** On Safari in Namibia.

**DUBRAVKA:** Safari?

**IVA:** Exactly..... it was magnificent. Zdravko shot 3 hyenas in one day.

**DUBRAVKA:** Three Hyenas?

**IVA:** Real Hyenas, like in a movie.

**VIKTOR:** Ladies and gentlemen, apologies but I must go. I have to get some work done, and prepare for an important meeting tomorrow morning.

**ZDRAVKO:** But we just started....

**VIKTOR:** If I didn't have that meeting I'd stay till midnight, but I have to have all of it ready by tomorrow morning, and it's at least couple of hours of work.

**ZDRAVKO:** Alright then, enjoy the work. Thank you for coming.

**DUBRAVKA:** Thank YOU.

**VIKTOR:** Good Night!

**IVA+ZDRAVKO:** Good Night!

(Dubravka and Viktor exit)

**ZDRAVKO:** Too bad they had to leave.

**BORIS:** Not easy. I wouldn't wanna be them right now.

**ALBERT:** What on earth are you talking about?

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

**ALBERT:** What?

**BORIS:** Their business is about to close. They are finished!

**ALBERT:** Who?

**BORIS:** Dubravka and Viktor.

**ALBERT:** IMPOSSIBLE!

**BORIS:** Unfortunately, very possible. My cousin works in a leasing firm that loaned their company the money for the car. Their car isn't at the mechanic, they missed the last 3 payments so it got repossessed.

**ALBERT:** Horrible! So they are really in trouble. This economy crisis ruined a lot of business owners, why them too?

**ZDRAVKO:** It will work its self out. There is always a way out in life and work, always a solution.

**NATASA:** I hope you are right.

#### Scene 11.

(We see Marina in the Garden, working on the roses with gardening scissors. It goes on for a little while. Pregnant Iva appears on stage. She seems to stare at Marina. Marina feels someone looking at her, stops her work and turns around. When she sees its Iva she continues her work as if she never saw her.)

**IVA:** Why are you cutting the roses?

**MARINA:** I'm pruning them, because it needs to be done. ... It's time for it.

**IVA:** Why?

**MARINA:** Fall is approaching. The weather report said in 2 days we will have a cold spell. If I prune their tips off, it will protect them from freezing. Do you understand?

**IVA:** No.

**MARINA:** Pruning the roses makes them "hibernate", go to sleep. It would be very dangerous for a flower to start growing and blooming in winter.... That's why, this time of year we don't water or add fertilizer to the plants.... all that would move them to be active, and my job right now is to get them ready for a winter sleep. So after pruning, we will pile up or "hill up" loose, well-drained soil around and over the plant to a depth of about 10-12 inches. We will then cover the mound with evergreen boughs, hardwood leaves or straw to help insulate and keep the soil frozen. Make sense?

**IVA:** I understand. I didn't know all this goes into the care of roses.

**MARINA:** Plants, animals and humans should get ready for winter. Winter is sleep time for all of botanical and animal world.

**IVA:** And I am giving birth in winter.

**MARINA:** That's a little inconvenient, that's true. I had my baby girl and my baby boy in Spring. Him in April and her in May. It's so much nicer for the Mother and for the baby

**IVA:** Well, had I known...but even if I had known, we never planned this...It just happened.

**MARINA:** It just happened?

**IVA:** Yes, it just happened....He was so good and, so gentle....

While I was working for him in the Firm, he was always so proud, always giving me subtle smirks, and then One Day out of the blue he said for my hard work he would reward me by taking me on Safari with all of his friends... When I saw Africa and all that.. I thought I was in a dream.. he was so caring, he dedicated most of his time to me....we started dating in Africa. I had no idea he was 5 years older than my Dad. Zdravko is so athletic and active, you never even think about age when you are with him...

**MARINA:** Sure, that's how it always is with successful businessmen.

**IVA:** And your husband? What does he do?

**MARINA:** Nothing.

**IVA:** What do you mean nothing? Is he retired already?

**MARINA:** No. He got fired 15 years ago.

**IVA:** I'm so sorry.

**MARINA:** I am too.

**IVA:** It must be so hard on him...

**MARINA:** Why? He lounges all day on the couch in front of the tv, then he strolls to the cafe, reads all the papers, catches up with his boys..Since he got fired, he actually has an amazing life...That's why I work for two.

(Silence)

**MARINA:** When are you due?

**IVA:** Two days before New Years.

**MARINA:** That's nice.... Every year, you will have Christmas, your girl's Birthday and New Year's all in one week.

**IVA:** Yeah that will be unusual for sure. I just hope I don't give birth right on New Years Eve, when only nightshift doctors are present and everyone is out celebrating.

**MARINA:** It won't happen.

**IVA:** I am so afraid...of everything that is coming.

**MARINA:** Oh c'mon... women just do it and get on with their lives.

**IVA:** I had a dream last night.... I dreamed that I died giving birth. I am scared of even going to bed tonight, I don't want that horrible dream coming back to me.

**MARINA:** Listen Iva, there isn't a pregnant woman out there who didn't have fear about giving birth, even feared death itself. Don't give in to those thoughts, don't allow them to roam in your head. Take up something to do, and don't think about it at all.

**IVA:** And what am I supposed to do this fat and clumsy?

**MARINA:** Make lunch for your husband.

**IVA:** I don't know how to make anything

**MARINA:** Nothing at all?

**IVA:** Nope. Cooking just isn't for me. My mom was always such an amazing cook, it was pointless attempting anything next to her. Plus I never had the time to learn, I was studying and training for gymnastics.

**MARINA:** Then grab a book and read.

**IVA:** I can't concentrate enough to read. My thoughts are always in the way, about the baby and the birth, and stomach. I'm so scared about the baby's health...I read somewhere, that birth itself hurts the baby more then it does the mother. I keep seeing images of hospitals and giving birth, blood soaked and sticky sheets that I'm wrapped up in...My mom suggested some cheesy romance novels, and I can't even get past page 20.....But even in the past books always annoyed me. I prefer films over reading a book, and those writers keep writing and publishing books that hardly anyone reads. It's so strange, isn't it?

(Silence)

**MARINA:** I never thought about it....So why don't you go to the movies or why don't you watch some film at home on television?

**IVA:** I hate watching movies by myself. I like to have a conversation about the movie afterwards with someone...and while I watch I like to comment on everything.

**MARINA:** And your husband? Why don't you watch movies with him?

**IVA:** He is so busy.... All those companies,1000 employees, every day 10 new problems appear. everybody envies him on all that he has, and they all wish they could be in his place, but nobody knows how hard it is for him to run all this.... Even if we start watching a movie in the evening.... soon after it starts he is already asleep, in his suit.

(Natasa appears)

**NATASA:** Hi!

**IVA:** What brings you here so early?

**NATASA:** The students are on strike.

**IVA:** Why?

**NATASA:** I'd like to know that too. Somebody had the brilliant idea that an education in this country should stay free forever.

**IVA:** Didn't anyone alert you there would be a strike?

**NATASA:** Nobody had a clue they were planing a strike. They waited for us at the University entrance with banners, whistles. I almost lost my hearing with all the whistling.... I couldn't sit in my office any more. But come exam times, those whistles won't be of much help.

(Silence)

**NATASA:** How are you feeling honey?

**IVA:** Ok.... I'm just having bad dreams.... It's uncomfortable sleeping with this giant belly. I don't know how to position myself, no position works.

**NATASA:** Hang in there... you are almost at the end, and it will all be behind you. I had to remain totally inactive during my pregnancy. They put me on all sorts of pills. I started to dilate up in my 5th month, so my gynecologist ordered strict bed rest. Every four hours I had to take pills to keep me closed up. And then when it was time to give birth the pills shut me so tight I had a hard time opening up to give birth. It tore me open badly, I still feel the stitches when the weather changes.

**IVA:** Natasa please, don't tell me stories like that...I get the chills just thinking about it...

**NATASA:** I won't, don't worry..... We can talk about fashion and politics if that's easier.

**IVA:** If I get a pick, I choose fashion.

#### Scene 12.

(Zdravko's third wife Anita, walked to the front door and stands by the speaker. She rings the bell, but no answer. She rings two more times before there is an answer on the speaker)

**OFF IVA:** Who is it?

**ANITA:** Anita, I need to talk to Zdravko.

**OFF ZDRAVKO:** Do not let her in the house. Tell her I'm not home.

**OFF IVA:** Zdravko isn't home.

**ANITA:** You lying bitch, I just heard his voice telling you, to tell me, he isn't home! Open the door, I have to talk to him.

**OFF IVA:** What should I do?

**OFF ZDRAVKO:** Tell her I'm not home, again.

**OFF IVA:** He says he is not home.

**ANITA:** Listen you little whore, tell that old ass to let me inside this minute or I will scream so loud, the whole neighborhood will hear me.

**OFF ZDRAVKO:** Listen Anita, we have nothing to discuss until you change your behavior! And stop insulting my wife because it could cost you dearly.

**ANITA:** You are three months behind on alimony! How am I supposed to live, how do you think am I supposed to pay for your son's kindergarten? I have to buy him winter boots and clothing.

**OF ZDRAVKO:** Until you let me have visitation again-every weekend-you won't see a cent my dear!

**ANITA:** The kid says he is scared. The little one said when you are with him, you are always on the phone, or you are playing cards with your friends! Children aren't for you!

**OFF ZDRAVKO:** Bullshit, I wanna see my kid every weekend, then you will get your alimony.

**ANITA:** I will sue you, If you don't pay what you owe me by tomorrow, they will start taking it from your paycheck.

**OFF ZDRAVKO:** Keep hoping. If you don't allow me to have my son once a week, you can take a hike.

**ANITA:** I will spill all the beans to the papers, I'll tell them I have no money for food, kindergarten, I'll shame you in front of the whole country.

**OFF ZDRAVKO:** Make sure you tell the journalists how last Saturday and Sunday you spent all night in nightclubs in suspicious company. I also can provide photographs and videos. You were seen drunk and acting slutty, you will lose custody forever.

**ANITA:** You asshole, open the door!

**OFF ZDRAVKO:** You have no business being in my apartment, and I refuse to continue fighting in front of my wife who is in her last trimester.

**ANITA:** Fuck her, and fuck the one who got her pregnant!

**OFF ZDRAVKO:** You cunt, one more word and I'm calling the police. I'll have you arrested for disturbing the peace.

(Davor appears with suit cases)

**DAVOR:** Hi!

**ANITA:** Hi! Where did you come from?

**DAVOR:** London!

**ANITA:** And why have you not answered your cell in months, and no reply to my emails?

**DAVOR:** Because my girlfriend is jealous.

**ANITA:** You could at least contact me when she isn't around.

**DAVOR:** Anita, I'm sorry but...

**ANITA:** But what? I'm really curious what excuse you have for such a rude behavior?

**DAVOR:** We can't have this discussion here... If you'd like we can go to a nearby cafe.

**ANITA:** Why don't you invite me up to your apartment?

**DAVOR:** My brother and my parents are up there.... waiting for me. Some Family crisis... I had to return home sooner then planned.... I have no idea what it's all about. I hope nobody is sick or anything like that.

**ANITA:** I am broke... If you can pick up the tab, I'll accept your invitation for a drink.

**DAVOR:** I am broke too but I do have enough for coffee. Let's go to a coffee shop!

**ANITA:** Let's go!

**OFF IVA:** They are going to a coffee shop!

**OFF ZDRAVKO:** Get the hell away from the speakerphone!

### Scene 13.

(This scene is happening immediately on the tail of the previous one.. In the apartment we see Dubravka, and her son Toni. Toni is surfing the net, while Dubravka is doing paperwork.)

**DUBRAVKA:** Did you hear that raucous outside? That's how dumped women scream! I feel bad for Anita, but in her place Zdravko's second wife was doing the same the year before and before her, it was the first wife. Divorces are horrible. Horrible. Please, think it trough a hundred times before you tie the knot.

**TONI:** I did, I love Ana, Ana loves me. I've never liked another girl in my life, one day I'm going to marry her and that's that. We will never get a divorce and we will never fight like that. That I am convinced of.

**DUBRAVKA:** You say that because you are so young.

**TONI:** I've been saying this for the last three years, I've liked her since high school. I had no

idea she liked me too. We have no dilemmas or issues. We are secure in our feelings towards each other.

**DUBRAVKA:** Pray to God it stays that way.

**TONI:** Hey listen, can I have Dad's checking account number for the Printing Company, I want to apply to an international video game invention competition.

**DUBRAVKA:** You know the account has been blocked. There is nothing in it...absolutely nothing.

**TONI:** I don't need it to take something out of it, it's just the rules of this competition, in case someone wins something they need it for a deposit.

**DUBRAVKA:** Yo've entered, what 20 of these competitions, and you've won nothing, you are just wasting time.

**TONI:** That is simply not true. Two years ago I won for "Catch the Horse" and received 160 US Dollars.

**DUBRAVKA:** You received 160 dollars for a job you worked on for a whole month. You would make more money peeling potatoes in some restaurant.

**TONI:** But I enjoy what I do. C'mon give me Dad's bank account number.

**DUBRAVKA:** Please don't. We are under an audit as it is. If you must, take the account number from my business account, even though there is no money in it because in the last year I printed and sold nothing. But here, take that one if you have to add a bank account.

(Dubravka hands over the card info)

**TONI:** Thank you.

(Toni is immediately filling in the forms with the numbers on the computer. In that moment, Viktor enters the apartment.)

**VIKTOR:** Hi!

**DUBRAVKA:** Hi! Did they do it?

**VIKTOR:** Nope. They said they are not giving loans even to those who have good credit right now.

**DUBRAVKA:** How about you call Bozidar?

**VIKTOR:** I called his secretary about 20 times last week, there is always an excuse: "He is in a meeting, he just left, he is just walking in, a presentation just started"...Anyhow, the word is out that we are in the hole, and everyone is avoiding me like the plague, everybody! I keep going over in my head how many people we've helped over the years, and now there is nobody to be found, nobody.

(Silence)

**VIKTOR:** What are you doing?

**TONI:** Well, I created this new video game so.....

**VIKTOR:** If you had graduated on time, you could get a job, but this way not much from you.

**TONI:** I'll be getting my teaching degree next year, but I'm not convinced that I'll be working in school. Printing saga is finished, this crisis destroyed everything, everything.

(Davor enters the apartment carrying a suitcase)

**DAVOR:** Hey people!

**DUBRAVKA:** My son! I didn't think you'd be coming around for another hour or two.

**DAVOR:** They bumped us up to an earlier flight in Vienna.

(Huggs and kisses with Dad and brother)

**VIKTOR:** You are finally here!

**DAVOR:** Usually when they switch our flights around I'm always late, this is the first time in my life I caught an earlier flight.

**TONI:** You got fat.

**DAVOR:** Just 4, 5 lbs. Why did I have to give up my flat in London and come home so suddenly? You said nothing over the phone. Are you ok, is somebody sick?

**VIKTOR:** Nobody is sick, but we are not ok. More accurately we are in pretty bad shape.

**DUBRAVKA:** Let him eat something first, get some rest, then we can...

**DAVOR:** Toni could have picked me up at the airport with the car so I didn't have to take the bus and then a cab.

**VIKTOR:** Nobody could have picked you up with the car.

**DAVOR:** Why not?

**VIKTOR:** Our company no longer has a car, the bank repossessed it.

**DAVOR:** And mom's car?

**VIKTOR:** That too. We are in ruins, everything is collapsing. That's why I told you to immediately return to Croatia, bring the document stating you've attended The London School of Economics, you are handing that document over to my friend tomorrow, and he will give you a job. It would have been better if you had already graduated but, I told him you only had one exam left, and you will finish that in a few months. You are practically a graduate already. Not everybody knows what's going on with us, so this guy whom I helped a few years back is going to interview you at Diners LLC. At least tomorrow we can get you a job since your dead beat brother is of no use to us. You have to be up very early tomorrow and of course take the tram to the Diners building.

**DAVOR:** Do I have to already go tomorrow?

**VIKTOR:** Yes you have to. He is there tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow he is off on a business trip, so I insisted you come in as soon as possible. That interview will just be pro forma, you start on Monday!

**DAVOR:** Wait, that's impossible.

**VIKTOR:** Why?

**DAVOR:** Well that paper, the university paper, stating I'm graduating this year..... see I..... How do I put it...

**VIKTOR:** Please don't tell me you forgot to bring it with you.

(Silence)

**VIKTOR:** God damn it you don't have it do you? I told you a million times to bring that paper!!!

**DAVOR:** I did bring it, but.....

**VIKTOR:** But what?

**DAVOR:** Please don't be mad but I... I didn't major in economics.

**VIKTOR:** Whaaaat?! What did you just say?

**DAVOR:** You wanted me to study economics so bad, and I never had the desire for it, so that year I went ahead and applied for 2 different majors, and I got in on to both...So I dropped economics and decided to study what I actually want and love, and not what you were pushing me to study.

**VIKTOR:** And what exactly..... did you study in London for the last five years, what major have you acquired in London...medicine, nuclear physics, pharmaceuticals...what?

**DAVOR:** I studied...I majored in History.

**VIKTOR:** History!?

**DAVOR:** Yes, History.

**VIKTOR:** You are kidding?

**DAVOR:** No. You always knew how much I loved History and that I was....

**VIKTOR:** Wait, wait...are you trying to tell me that you spent in the last five years, and a hundred thousand pounds in the most expensive city in Europe, to study stupid fucking History?!?!

**DAVOR:** Yes.

**VIKTOR:** You are out of your mind!!! I am going to kill you...you could have studied that here in Zagreb, and for free!!! I will strangle you with my bare hands!

**DUBRAVKA:** Hold on..he is just pulling your leg. C'mon Davor, tell your Dad it's all a big joke, none of it is true.

(Silence)

**DUBRAVKA:** Please say it isn't true, and that it's all some kind of bad joke.

(Silence. Davor lowers his eyes)

**DUBRAVKA:** We are going to kill him together.

(Toni jumps up from his chair)

**TONI:** Guys what is the matter with you?? If you hadn't pushed your desires on him, we wouldn't be in this situation. It's better he studied something he actually loves rather than something he isn't remotely interested in. Do you have any idea what it's like to study something you loathe???Do you?!

**VIKTOR:** Shut up please! I have two sons, and I thought at least one of you would be worth something.. but lo and behold, I have two zeros. Two big fat Zeros. Two idiots!!

#### Scene 14.

(On stage we see Boris, Viktor and Zdravko. It's important to state that Viktor stands in the middle. Lighting will suggest two unrealistic spaces. We are about to have two different milieus, and two different conversations and scenes happening parallel, simultaneously. In one dialogue Viktor has a conversation with Boris, and the second one is Viktor talking to Zdravko.

SCENE A Dialogue between Boris and Viktor

SCENE B Dialogue between Zdravko and Viktor)

SCENE A)

**VIKTOR:** Boris I apologize, may I talk to you for a minute?

**BORIS:** I'm in a rush right now, can we do it tomorrow or the day after?

**VIKTOR:** It's pretty urgent.

**BORIS:** Let's go to my place and.....

**VIKTOR:** Is Natasa there?

**BORIS:** Yes ,she is.

**VIKTOR:** I'd rather we were alone.

**BORIS:** I have no secrets with my wife.

**VIKTOR:** I know but this is work related.

**BORIS:** What work?

SCENE B)

**VIKTOR:** Boy am I glad to run into you. How are you?

**ZDRAVKO:** Good, yourself?

**VIKTOR:** So, so.

**ZDRAVKO:** Well, it will get better.

**VIKTOR:** You think?

**ZDRAVKO:** One has to be optimistic.

**VIKTOR:** Even for optimism one needs some kind of reason to base it upon...

SCENE A)

**VIKTOR:** Important work.

**BORIS:** You and I never talked about business. You know that as a law professor I never venture into any kind of businesses ventures.

**VIKTOR:** You are still in a position often to make certain decisions, so you can help.

**BORIS:** I don't see how.

**VIKTOR:** I know you are on the boards of "MAIL BANK".

**BORIS:** Oh that...Yes but regulations are strict over there. We basically don't make any decisions, we only oversee them.

**VIKTOR:** But you are close to the Chairman of the Bank. If you drop in a good word for me, maybe they'll give me another loan. I had a loan with them for 7 years, and everything went splendid, until two years ago when it all came crashing down.

SCENE B)

**ZDRAVKO:** A pessimist scares off the people around him. An optimist has good vibes around him and everyone wants to be around him, so he excels the most in work. He is the most likely to succeed.

**VIKTOR:** So I have to have an optimistic outlook?

**ZDRAVKO:** I was being more general in that advice, not so much personal.

**VIKTOR:** Well I'm in a situation where I need help of a more personal nature, rather than general psychological support.

**ZDRAVKO:** A man can help himself the best.

**VIKTOR:** I have been in a jam for so long now, that I am of no help to myself. Not any more.

SCENE A)

**BORIS:** From Day one when I became a member of the Board, the Chairman specifically gave a speech stating that he won't look the other way, even for his brother, and he expects the same from us. It is important we uphold certain moral and ethical principles equal to politicians, cousins, friends and small unknown customers alike.

**VIKTOR:** But I personally know some folks where the Bank did just that looked the other way, gave them a break, and postponed possession.

**BORIS:** Maybe that did happen in the past, yes, but a year ago it was decided that practice is no longer acceptable, because it could bring the Bank down.

SCENE B)

**ZDRAVKO:** I have 3000 people working for me, every month I have to come up with 3000 paychecks, and in this economic crisis it's becoming harder and harder.

**VIKTOR:** I just need one loan. A smaller one.....well a modest amount to bring me above water and save me from drowning...

**ZDRAVKO:** Last time I loaned money to 3 of my friends was exactly 30 years ago. Not one of them returned the money to me, and I lost 3 friends, but at the same time I majored in the most important subject in life. Since then I refuse to loan anybody anything, not a cent. Interestingly enough, it is since that pivotal decision, that my business started taking off, and I have't looked back since.

SCENE A)

**VIKTOR:** I just need a postponement ..... of 6 months, that's all, just to get my head above water.

**BORIS:** I don't know how I can help you there.

**VIKTOR:** Talk to the Chairman, or even better, arrange a meeting with him. I haven't been able to get him on the phone for months now.

**BORIS:** Viktor, you know you are blacklisted, and everyone is fearing they won't see a cent they loaned you.

**VIKTOR:** Yes, that's why I need help so I don't hit rock bottom.

**BORIS:** You are behind on your loan payments, for over a year. When the market crashed, instead of cutting down your business, you went out and bought more printing machines. You refused to lay people off for sentimental reasons, and month in and month out you kept drowning in more debt. Everybody in town knows, you will never dig yourself out of that hole and pay off all the debt you've accumulated. Sell everything you own, keep paying off the bank loan, or they will bury you. Banks are merciless even to their own, just last month they let go of several people.

SCENE B)

**ZDRAVKO:** But you do have to be an optimists. An incorrigible optimist. There is no situation that doesn't offer an exit. There is always a way out, in any scenario, as long as the man has the courage and isn't afraid of dying.

**VIKTOR:** Isn't afraid of dying?!?!

**ZDRAVKO:** Indeed. Only the ones who do not fear death are brave.

Scene 15.

(In the garden we spot Marina and the maid Kata. Marina is trimming the roses while Kata is sweeping the sidewalk)

**MARINA:** See, some idiot, let's his dog off the leash, so the damn dog digs holes all around the rosebushes, and now I have to try and save them. All these dog owners do not take care of their dogs as they should. They should all pay a huge fine for not having their dog on leash so it never occurs to them to do it again.....Even the Fall weather, this heat wave is as if it were about to start summer. None of this is good for people, plants or animals alike. It's all gone mad.

**KATA:** I woke up 3 times last night, I couldn't fall asleep. Finally right before dawn I managed to really fall asleep. Otherwise, I sleep really well. This odd weather change really does affect one's mood and causes insomnia.

(Viktor comes out of the House. He seems distraught, and approaches the two ladies. He is hesitating before asking what he must)

**VIKTOR:** May I borrow a phone from either of you for a second? They just turned our phones off. And I have to call my lawyer.

**KATA:** You can use mine.

(Hands Viktor the cell)

**VIKTOR:** I won't be long.

**KATA:** No problem.

(Viktor dials the phone and moves away from them to the side)

**VIKTOR:** Hello, it's Viktor! Listen, something horrible has happened... No, I don't have a new number, they disconnected all our phones..... Yes it's an emergency, of course..... we received an eviction notice yesterday for both of our condos.... Well I was gonna ask YOU what to do, you are the lawyer...What do you mean it's too late for everything? Give me some advice, a solution, anything, you are my lawyer... You can't just...I haven't paid you because my accounts are frozen...Please help me out man, and I will pay you.... For Christ's sake man, they are throwing us out on the street!!!!...Well all that advise you gave us in the past wasn't the best either, it wasn't just my fault.

(Dubravka comes outside )

**VIKTOR:** For ten years I've been paying you on time, are you really going to do this because of the last few months...if you don't help me,there is no one else..... call them, threaten to sue them, whatever... As my lawyer you can't leave us hung-out to dry like that....What do you mean you aren't my lawyer any more?!..Wait, hold on!....

(Viktor ends the call)

**VIKTOR:** Shit!

**DUBRAVKA:** So, no use from him?

**VIKTOR:** Nothing.

(Kata and Marina are staring at them. Viktor senses them looking over and hands over the cell back to Kata)

**VIKTOR:** Kata, thank you, regardless thank you.

**KATA:** Is there a problem?

**DUBRAVKA:** Oh it will work itself out.

**VITKOR:** Unfortunately its a big problem. And I'm afraid nothing can be done any more about it. Nothing at all. Today is Tuesday, and by next Monday we have to be out of this house. We have to get out of both apartments and we have nowhere to go. We don't have a dollar to our name, or a Euro. We are ruined, the company and us. We are practically out on the street.The company and the house were under a bank loan, the cars were being leased, and so it's done. We have nothing left. The End.

(Silence)

**MARINA:** Where are your sons?

**VIKTOR:** Davor went to see if he can get some kind of a job through the University Students Union, even though he is a student from London not here in Zagreb. And Toni went to a computer gaming competition in Split. I won't burden him with this, let him do the competition in peace, he comes back the day before we move out.

**DUBRAVKA:** But where are we gonna go?

**VIKTOR:** On the street.

**DUBRAVKA:** You can't be serious.

**VIKTOR:** It's time to face the facts.

(Silence)

**KATA:** If you'd like, you can come to our home for a bit

**VIKTOR:** What do you mean your Home?

**KATA:** Our kids are out of the house, we have two bedrooms and a bathroom up in the attic. Our son used to be in one of the rooms and our two daughters in the other. Now it just sits there empty, sometimes our grandkids spend the night. You can move in temporarily until you get back on your feet.

The only thing is we are in the suburbs, and the closest bus station is ten minute walk.

**VIKTOR:** But we have no money to pay for rent, we can't even afford a moving truck. We have nothing.

**KATA:** Our neighbor has a big truck, we can ask him to loan it to us for a day. My husband will help you all move.

**DUBRAVKA:** But Kata, we owe you your paycheck for the last three months...Marina to.

**KATA:** Whatever, you'll pay us when you get back on track. Isn't that right Marina?

**MARINA:** Well, I don't know, I can't wait forever. Maybe we can make a bargain.

**VIKTOR:** A bargain?

**MARINA:** That furniture, I'm pretty sure you won't need it where you are going. I mean at Kata's, those are tiny rooms. You'll have to store most of your stuff in her wooden shed.... Isn't it better if I just pick out a piece of furniture for the compensation of the money you owe me, rather than let it sit and rot over there. For example that couch in the main living room.

**DUBRAVKA:** But, that's our whole life...it's not just furniture, I hope we will have a roof over our head soon again.

**MARINA:** What if you don't? Shame to have it just rot, and your debts piling up. If I were you, I'd sell all the furniture.

(Silence)

**DUBRAVKA:** I have to.... have to go inside and take a pill.... this air pressure... the weather change can really be felt.

#### Scene 16.

(Zdravko's penthouse in the midst of Iva's 28th birthday celebration. We see Natasa, Boris, Albert, Iva and Zdravko.)

**ALBERT:** Can you imagine the panic that ensued when the night nurse noticed the patient was not in his bed.

**BORIS:** Ok, ok, how is that even possible? For a patient to just stroll out of the hospital without anyone noticing?

**ALBERT:** We have no guards or security personnel. He just walked out, an hour before the surgery. We even did the enema this morning and he was shaved all around his midsection.

**NATASA:** So what did you do?

**ALBERT:** They called his daughter, the police were notified....I mean you know how long one waits to get a surgery scheduled.

(Kata shows up with a tray of appetizers and sets it down to a moving table where the drinks and glasses are stationed.)

**ZDRAVKO:** Did you find him?

**ALBERT:** No way. He even left his cell phone behind, if he had only taken his cell with him, the cops could have located him, but this way? Nada.

(Doorbell rings)

**ZDRAVKO:** Come in!

(Viktor and Dubravka enter)

**VIKTOR:** Good evening everyone.

**IVA:** Good Evening.

**ZDRAVKO:** There you are! We were just waiting for you.

**VIKTOR:** Happy Birthday!

(Viktor kisses Iva)

**IVA:** Thank you!

**DUBRAVKA:** Happy Birthday from the bottom of my heart. How old?

**IVA:** 28, thank you!

(Dubravka and Iva kiss)

**VIKTOR:** So sorry we are late. And forgive us for not giving you a real gift.... Here, this book is from the turn of the 20th century with Matos signature... we decided to give it to you.

(Viktor hands her the book)

**IVA:** With Matos signature? Are you for real?

**VIKTOR:** Yes.

**DUBRAVKA:** Turn the first page.

(Iva turns the first page)

**IVA:** Seriously? Matos signature?

**ALBERT:** Can I see?

**NATASA:** So the original Hancock?

**ALBERT:** There it is, it said "A.G. Matos"

(everyone is hovering over the book)

**NATASA:** Marvelous handwriting...people cared about a handwriting in those days.

**BORIS:** Let me see.

**IVA:** You shouldn't have. That is very valuable. I know you guys are in a difficult situation, such a pricey gift...why?

**VIKTOR:** Frankly, we were surprised and very touched by your and Zdravko's Birthday invitation. To be honest since everyone found out about our situation, no one invites us anywhere. We wanted you guys to have something to remember us by, both you and Zdravko. Truth is, we are moving out the day after tomorrow.

**ZDRAVKO:** Moving out? Seriously? Do you have to?

**VIKTOR:** We have to. In two days time those condos will no longer be ours. We lost the company as well, forever. Luckily we have no other debts. We are at zero. We settled with the banks and all others that we owed so now we are free and clear.

**DUBRAVKA:** In socialism we used to call that a positive zero. The most important thing is, there is no more debt, or negative balances.

**ALBERT:** So now what? What will you live on?

**VIKTOR:** I start a teaching job on Tuesday at an elementary school. One teacher left to have her baby and my old college roommate is the school's principle, so I'll be the substitute teacher until she comes back.

**ALBERT:** Thank God that doesn't sound that bad at all. The most important thing is that one has a job.

**DUBRAVKA:** I'm trying to do the same, get a job as a teacher in school. After all it's a nice job, I intend to work with young students, I can't imagine anything better than that.

**IVA:** But this book could mean a lot to you, and you gave it to me as a gift.

**VIKTOR:** You and Zdravko will be better keepers of it than us. Zdravko took us 3 times to a Safari, I'll never forget that. We have a lot of uncertainty ahead of us, and renting apartments, it's better people like you keep this book, people who live in a House of Dreams....and what did Zdravko give you?

**IVA:** Don't even ask.

**ZDRAVKO:** She is pissed.

**VIKTOR:** Why?

**IVA:** Get this, he gave me a 28 year old bottle of wine. Aged like me.

**ZDRAVKO:** I thought she's find that charming.

**IVA:** You can't compare me to a bottle of wine.

**ZDRAVKO:** Sweetie if you only knew the effort I had to put in, in order to find that bottle of wine, you'd be at least a little more appreciative.

**IVA:** If you were trying to be funny, it didn't make me laugh.

**ZDRAVKO:** Ok honey, if you can please forgive me...please do. We almost forgot our guests and their drinks. Kata!

**KATA:** Yes?

**ZDRAVKO:** Please bring some drinks for Viktor and Dubravka.

**KATA:** Coming.

(Kata brings over wine and glasses)

**VIKTOR:** Thank you.

**ZDRAVKO:** Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to toast all of you, but first and foremost a toast to my dear wife. Dear Iva, I don't know with whom you celebrated your 27th birthday, but I am overjoyed that you are celebrating your 28th with me. There I shall be honest, and I will speak like an experienced hunter. Iva, you remind me of the deer that fell into a hunters trap, a deer surrounded by hunting dogs that bark and are getting ready to tear you apart...

**IVA:** I'm sorry Zdravko, but you are drunk and you are talking nonsense. Is that supposed to be a Birthday Speech?! First you insult me with that bottle of wine, and now with that silly comparison to a deer and hunting dogs. What's the matter with you today?!?

**ZDRAVKO:** I'm sorry honey, but please let me finish. Until you've heard the moral of the story, you can't judge it, the same with speeches, you just can't interrupt me. So, where was I?! Right, I was trying to say that as a seasoned hunter, using hunting terminology helps me express my thoughts and feelings. Therefore I will compare my self to a lion, the king of the animals. A symbol of power, a symbol of strength. But people, many people, never ask themselves how does the lion feel? Does a lion have a right to weakness, is that lion somewhere losing his power, are there other lions looking to take his place? Not once, did I read a kind empathetic word about myself in the papers. Never. Only attacks. lions too can be trapped, but a lion too can find itself in a desperate situation with no way out. But if a lion is brave, there is always a way out. For people who are not afraid of death, there is always a way out. What I'm trying to say is, Iva is in one trap, and I in another. And rabid hunting dogs are attacking both the deer and the lion, as if they have no way of escaping. Maybe that's what brought us together in the first place, being in similar situations. And so I wish you my dear Iva a very Happy Birthday, a lot of courage in the years ahead of you. Cheers and hear hear!

**EVERYONE:** Cheers!

**NATASA:** Lovely speech.

**IVA:** This is the dumbest birthday speech I have ever heard. What exactly were you trying to say to me?

**ZDRAVKO:** I was trying to encourage you.

**IVA:** My fear of giving birth is my problem. At least on my birthday you could have helped me to forget about it.

**ZDRAVKO:** That was encouraging you for the rest of your life, not for the birth.

**IVA:** I don't understand.....

**ZDRAVKO:** You will.

**IVA:** You shouldn't drink as much. This is my birthday, not yours. I don't know why but, you've been drinking since this morning.

**ZDRAVKO:** One has to drink...drinking helps. When we drink we become more courageous .

**ALBERT:** Good wine....excellent wine.

**ZDRAVKO:** They make magnificent wines on Peljesac. Truly magnificent.

**BORIS:** I couldn't agree more. Their winemakers are one of the best in the country.

**ALBERT:** Well listen, it's always sunny over there, and the winemakers today have an education, not like in the past.

**ZDRAVKO:** True, true.....Excuse me folks, but I must excuse myself for a minute, I have to lie down for a little bit, please entertain my wife. I'll be back soon. You were wonderful, you were the best neighbors, I am so glad to have had you here. Life flies so fast, and one day you realize it's not important what you've achieved, but with whom you spent it, and shared those moments, who was with you...that's what matters most... Take care of yourself..I'm gonna go lie down a bit. I have to rest, take a nap.

**BORIS:** No problem.

(Zdravko retreats into his room)

**DUBRAVKA:** You know what, I can remember my 28th Birthday.

**ALBERT:** I can't even remember what I had for lunch yesterday.

**DUBRAVKA:** Viktor took me to a Chinese restaurant, it was one of the first Chinese restaurants in town back then.

**VIKTOR:** Petrinjska Street.

**DUBRAVKA:** Back then Chinese restaurants were more expensive than any other restaurant. I even remember the music they were playing that day.

**NATASA:** How can you remember after all these years?

**DUBRAVKA:** Of course I can, because it was the night he proposed to me.

**IVA:** On your birthday?

**DUBRAVKA:** In the middle of the birthday celebration as a matter of fact.. I was just saying how birthdays for me were always the saddest days in the year, how I'm always depressed on that day, and Viktor pulled out a little box with a ring from inside his jacket pocket and said: " If I had know, maybe I would have picked a different occasion to ask you this, but I decided to do it today and.."

(Shotgun blast is heard from the room where Zdravko went to! Everyone jumps up in fear!)

**BORIS:** What was that?!

**ALBERT:** A gun, a gun went off!

**IVA:** Did something happen to Zdravko?!

**VIKTOR:** Wait, hold on! You should not go in. Stay with Iva. I'll go in and check it out.

(Viktor enters the hunting room)

**NATASA:** What could that have been?

**IVA:** I hope he isn't hurt?

**KATA:** I hope no...anything I can do?

**ALBERT:** Just don't panic...we'll find out soon enough. Everybody stay calm.

**BORIS:** I'm afraid he didn't...

(Door opens and Viktor appears)

**VIKTOR:** It's ok. Everything is alright. He is just unconscious. Call the ambulance and don't come in until they arrive. Best thing for Iva is to sit down so she doesn't get nauseous from the gun shot.

**IVA:** Thank God it isn't something worse. I really got scared there for a minute. I've told him a hundred times not to drink, but when he is under a lot of pressure he can't go without a bottle.

**DUBRAVKA:** I'll call 911.

(Viktor approaches Albert, takes him under the arm and moves him aside to tell him something out of the others earshot)

**VIKTOR:** Do you have a sedative of sort? Iva will need one.

**ALBERT:** Why?

**VIKTOR:** Zdravko shot himself in the heart. He is lying there in a pool of blood. He is dead. She can't see that. It's a horrible sight.. I'm worried about her losing the baby.

**ALBERT:** Oh dear God!

(Darkness and a sound of sirens)

#### Scene 17.

(In Viktor's Apartment we see Davor, Viktor and Dubravka as they are packing up the dishes and clothes. Their packing lasts a while, a long while. Everything is happening in silence. At one moment Dubravka stops, sits on a chair and starts weeping.)

**VIKTOR:** Dubravka please don't....

**DUBRAVKA:** Forgive me...I just have a hard time accepting that everything we've worked for..... our whole life..... that tomorrow we will have nothing left, living in someone else's home...

(Her crying becomes stronger now, Viktor approaches, puts his hand on her head)

**VIKTOR:** Honey, we are alive and well. All four of us..that's what matters most.

**DUBRAVKA:** I know, I know...I'm sorry...I just can't think, or do anything. My concentration is gone, ever since the shooting. Since Zdravko did that to himself yesterday ..I don't know why he did that..I can't make sense of it.

**VIKTOR:** I can.

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

**VIKTOR:** He left a goodbye letter.

**DAVOR:** What do you mean a goodbye letter.

**VIKTOR:** A real farewell letter.

**DUBRAVKA:** Why haven't you given the letter to the police?

**VIKTOR:** Because it's not fair, or nice towards his family, for the ones that are left behind.

**DUBRAVKA:** But...you should have...Do you have it or did you destroy it?

**VIKTOR:** I have it right here. I'll read it to you but you must promise that you never ever...No one is to ever find out about this.

(Viktor takes a letter from inside his jacket pocket)

**VIKTOR:** I read and reread it ten times, so here.. (starts to read) “Greetings everyone. I am leaving this world behind and I have no regrets. My business empire is about to collapse, all the companies I built will be closing next month. All the women who entered my life did so out of personal gain and interest. I am leaving them nothing, except debts. I have no regrets about that. Even my children only saw me as their ATM, not their father. I can’t do this any longer. Good bye everyone and see you all in hell. Your Zdravko!”

(Silence)

**DUBRAVKA:** Terrible!

**DAVOR:** I thought he loved this life he was living.

**VIKTOR:** He did when everything was going his way.

**DUBRAVKA:** You really won’t give this to anyone of his kin, or the police?

**VIKTOR:** If I give it to the police they will give it to Iva or his eldest daughter from his first marriage. It’s better they don’t know what he wrote about them. It’s better they remember him in a better light... with a letter it seems as if he is blaming them for his death. Let them live without that burden. See, he was facing a financial collapse, and he spoke to no one about it.. that’s why he couldn’t help us either. And I was mad at him over it, very mad.

**DUBRAVKA:** Me even more.

(Toni enters the apartment with a backpack on his back.)

**TONI:** Hey guys! How come nobody is answering their phone, for days now? Not even the landline. What’s going on?

**VIKTOR:** They disconnected our phones. Have you heard about Zdravko?

**TONI:** I did on the radio, on the bus. I couldn’t believe it. Did he really kill himself?

**VIKTOR:** Yes... With a shotgun.

**TONI:** And what’s with all these boxes?

**VIKTOR:** We are moving out tomorrow morning. The bank repossessed our homes. We lost the printing company too.

**TONI:** But where are you going?

**VIKTOR:** We are moving in with Kata...she will give us her attic until we get back on our feet.

**TONI:** It doesn’t have to be that way. You can keep the condos, maybe you can even save the printing company.

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

**TONI:** I won!

**DUBRAVKA:** The computer competition?

**TONI:** No, the competition for the best video game in the world! Google had a world wide competition for the best new video game. I found out yesterday my game won.

**DAVOR:** Which one?

**TONI:** “The Last Parachuter”

**DAVOR:** That’s a great one.

**TONI:** The whole world will know about my game now. you know how much the reward is?

**VIKTOR:** How much? A thousand dollars?

**TONI:** Two Million Dollars.

**VIKTOR:** Two million dollars! Impossible! Someone is joking with you.

**DUBRAVKA:** How many times have I received emails that I’ve won some big award and it was all a scam.

**VIKTOR:** It must be some kind of a joke.

**TONI:** It's not a joke. They wrote to me that money has already been transferred into mom's account. The one for her special edition printing.

**VIKTOR:** I don't believe it. Did you check the account?

**TONI:** No.... I don't know how to access the account. We can check it now. Mom, do you know your account password?

**DUBRAVKA:** Yes, I do.

**TONI:** Here's my iPhone, go ahead and check.

(Dubravka take her son's cell, types in her info and waits bit for it to load.)

**DUBRAVKA:** There must be some kind a mistake!?! How is this possible...it says two million dollars!?!

**TONI:** That's the reward.

**VIKTOR:** Wait, does anyone know about this?

**TONI:** Nobody, the winner chooses if he or she wants to stay anonymous or if they want their identity known.

**VIKTOR:** And what have you decided?

**TONI:** I decided to stay anonymous .

**VIKTOR:** Smart.... All this money, what are you going to do with it?

**TONI:** What do you mean what am I going to do with it?

**VIKTOR:** What will you spend the money on?

**TONI:** Well I was thinking of taking a little bit for my self and the rest is for you to save the Condos and start a new business.

**VIKTOR:** How much were you gonna take for you self?

**TONI:** Well...I was gonna take 3 thousand dollars. I need a new computer and new winter boots.

**VIKTOR:** New winter boots?

**TONI:** Yes winter boots, if it's ok with you guys....But if you need all the money I'll just buy the computer.

**VIKTOR:** Just the computer?

**TONI:** yes, if you need all the money.

**VIKTOR:** You are out of your mind...You are the best child in the whole world, the best!

**TONI:** Why?

**DUBRAVKA:** He asks why..... We don't have to move out of this House. We can keep both condos and have enough left over to start another serious business...a new company. And you don't have to start work in that school Tuesday.

**VIKTOR:** No, we are not staying here. We are leaving this House....We are moving in with Kata, and I will start teaching on Tuesday.

**DUBRAVKA:** But why? With all this money?

**VIKTOR:** I will be a teacher in a school. Not a business owner. I never took to the business world anyhow.. it's just not for me, or for you. We are your typical run of the mill educators. I wish you would go back to teaching as well. Like old times.

**DUBRAVKA:** But why go to Kata's when we can afford a hotel until we get these condos back?

**VIKTOR:** No! Never again! We will buy a normal Apartment in a normal building, and with the rest of the money let Toni buy himself an apartment and let him start a company creating these video games, or whatever he wants... I don't want to give him any advice, I'm not sure I know what's best for him.

**TONI:** I'll buy an apartment for my brother too.

**DAVOR:** I don't need anything, you spent so much money on me in London.

**TONI:** It will be easier for you to start a life when you have something of your own. Besides I supported your decision in studying History.... when you asked me what to choose from Economics or History.

**DAVOR:** True, you did say “ Make a decision with your heart, without any regards to money”

**TONI:** Maybe because of that advice you will never make big bucks, but at least you will love what you do and you will have a roof over your head.

**DUBRAVKA:** Is it possible they are.... that these are our children?!

**VIKTOR:** Looks-wise definitely..but everything else, I’d argue negative. They are definitely better human beings, then either of us.

### **EPILOG**

(Natasa and Boris come on stage and are staring at “The House”)

**BORIS:** This house of ours...who would say it’s been a whole Year since Zdravko did that to himself. When we moved in here six and a half years ago, it was so totally new, it was “glowing”.

**NATASA:** It was freshly painted all white, and now the white seems almost gray.

**BORIS:** It should be painted again...although it seems it will never have that glow again, like in the beginning.

(Albert shows up and starts looking at the house)

**ALBERT:** After that tragic night, I knew I had to get the hell out of this house. All those memories of Zdravko, Natasa, and the past...I broke it off with both women, of whom I truly loved neither.... I’ve been in a relationship now for two months with a wonderful girl..I just can’t believe it...It’s like I’m 25 again. I will propose to her tomorrow.

(Zdravko appears in a black suit)

**ZDRAVKO:** They let me go... A year ago today.... Only today am I allowed to see this damned house in which I committed that which can’t be forgiven. They let me go so I can “relive” the horror and realize my whole Life was one giant mistake...And that day, that cursed unfortunate day, was the beginning of my detrimental eternity..... If I had been living in a different house, maybe all of this would have turned out differently.

(Viktor and Dubravka appear)

**DUBRAVKA:** Look... Our old home. Should we stop in, say hello to Boris and Natasa?

**VIKTOR:** We better not.

**DUBRAVKA:** Why not?

**VIKTOR:** I’d like to forget.

**DUBRAVKA:** Forget what?

**VIKTOR:** Those years...and those condos and that house..... regardless of its beauty, it just never felt right to me.

**DUBRAVKA:** To be honest, I felt the same.

**VIKTOR:** Where did that come from?

**DUBRAVKA:** While we were living there, I always had these headaches. This dull constant ache. And as soon as we moved to Kata’s, it just stopped. Even in our new place, I sleep like a baby.

**VIKTOR:** Me too.

**DUBRAVKA:** Why are you against saying hello to Boris and Natasa? They are the only ones from our crew that stayed there.

**VIKTOR:** That's why.

**DUBRAVKA:** I don't follow.

**VIKTOR:** They obviously feel good in that house..They like it there, right?

**DUBRAVKA:** Sure, and why is that bad?

**VIKTOR:** It's not. Just proves they are different then us. They are not like us, not any more.

**DUBRAVKA:** You think?

**VIKTOR:** I do.

**DUBRAVKA:** I just wanted to say hello, that's all.

**VIKTOR:** I just wouldn't want to...

**DUBRAVKA:** Wouldn't want to what?

**VIKTOR:** I don't want to get a desire to be in a house like that again or to have that life back. I am content the way things are right now.

**DUBRAVKA:** You are right.. better not to tempt the memories or desires.

**THE END**

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