

KONSTANTIN ILIEV

BEETHOVEN 21

a play

2006

Translated by  
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*CHARACTERS*

MARIA SEDLAROVA

DIMITAR SEDLAROV

RADOSLAV

VENETA

TONY

VIHRA

BOGOMIL MILEV – THE WORSHIPPER

ZVEZDELINA

TSIKO

DZHURKO

THIS TIME

## PART ONE

*The area in front of the ground floor of a house. A wide window, probably of the kitchen. On its right a door, leading into the interior of the ground floor. The space in front is covered with cement, as is typical for such places in Bulgarian villages and small towns. In warm summer days a table and chairs are placed there. Sometimes the branches of a trellis vine hang over the area – young or already half-dry.*

1.

*Beethoven's violin concerto can be heard.*

SEDLAROV *(takes a cassette out of a portable cassette recorder. Examines it.)*

What did you decide, aunt? Are you getting married?

SEDLAROVA *(from outside)*. What? What is it, Mitko?

SEDLAROV. I asked – are you getting married?

SEDLAROVA. I don't know. I don't, I really don't.

SEDLAROV. Come on, coffee's ready. *(Switches the cassette recorder on again. Pours coffee.)*

TSIKO *(from inside)*. Won't you turn that off, Mitko!

SEDLAROV. What did you say? *(Turns down the volume.)*

TSIKO. That jangle-box, turn it off!

SEDLAROV. Does it bother you?

TSIKO. It bothers me a lot.

SEDLAROV. All right. *(The music stops. He puts away the cassette recorder, thrusting his head through the open kitchen window.)*

## 2.

SEDLAROVA (*enters on the right, probably from the front garden, stops, follows the flight of something that the audience cannot see.*) This butterfly's been flying around all summer on her own.

SEDLAROV. Which one exactly?

SEDLAROVA. Whoosh! Flying off again.

SEDLAROV. I see three butterflies.

SEDLAROVA. Alone. All summer.

SEDLAROV. And how do you tell butterflies apart? They don't have numbers on their wings, do they?

SEDLAROVA. All summer. Alone.

SEDLAROV. That's bad.

SEDLAROVA. All others – two by two. She – alone.

SEDLAROV. That's too bad.

SEDLAROVA. Let's go arrange the clothes, otherwise the moths will eat them.

SEDLAROV. They won't eat them. Aren't the clothes locked in the community center? Locked in chests. They won't eat them.

SEDLAROVA. There's this shirt, called the Hanging Shirt. Do you know of the Hanging Shirt?

SEDLAROV. I don't.

SEDLAROVA. A maiden started a complicated embroidery. And she couldn't finish it. And she hanged herself. From desperation. A beautiful shirt. Old women know it.

SEDLAROV. Nobody knows anything.

SEDLAROVA. A very beautiful shirt. Unfinished, but very beautiful. It's called the Hanging Shirt. Old women know of it. We will hang it in a central place.

SEDLAROV. You can't hang it anyplace. Old Tihomir doesn't give his house.

SEDLAROVA. Tihomir and I have settled it. The Hanging Shirt. Very beautiful. What about the violin?

SEDLAROV. What violin?

SEDLAROVA. I gave you a violin as a gift.

SEDLAROV. Did you? When?

SEDLAROVA. You shouldn't have stopped the violin.

SEDLAROV. The masterhand gets annoyed. He'll stick the tiles all crooked.

SEDLAROVA. You tell him to go away.

SEDLAROV. Why? You wanted the bathroom fixed.

SEDLAROVA. He should go away!

SEDLAROV. But he's the best. (*Loudly.*) Tsiko! Will you have a beer? (*To Sedlarova again.*) Here, in this village, that's what masterhands are like. You should have stayed in the town, in Pleven.

SEDLAROVA. Did the inspectors go?

SEDLAROV. What inspectors?

SEDLAROVA. They should know better but to send me just a kid to inspect me. Did you hear him call her "mother". The inspector kid.

SEDLAROV. Inspector kid?

SEDLAROVA. The inspector kid of the inspector woman. Called her "mother".

SEDLAROV. Your daughter-in-law is here. And your grandson. They're not inspectors. They want to take you to Sofia with them.

SEDLAROVA. Why does he call her "mother"?

SEDLAROV. Because she's his mother.

SEDLAROVA. That's not right. The house is around since the Ottoman Empire. There's no other one like it around. Do you see the porch?

SEDLAROV. I see it.

SEDLAROVA. Look at it, when I tell you!

SEDLAROV. I see it.

SEDLAROVA. The shirt we'll put in front of the windows. In the middle – the Hanging Shirt. Do you know why it's called the Hanging Shirt?

SEDLAROV. I do. But old Tihomir doesn't give his house.

SEDLAROVA. Tihomir and I have settled it. They'll build him, Tihomir, a new house. I spoke with... ah... what's his name.

SEDLAROV. Who?

SEDLAROVA. The party secretary.

SEDLAROV. There are no party secretaries any longer, aunt. There haven't been any for fifteen years.

SEDLAROVA. I know there aren't. (*Looks in the same direction again.*) Do you see the porch?

SEDLAROV. It's a very nice porch. When you marry old Tihomir you'll have your coffee on it.

SEDLAROVA. Did he tell you that?

SEDLAROV. You told me. You said you'd been sweethearts with him way back.

## 2.

TSIKO (*enters. Opens a bottle of beer*). How's the missus? Will you appoint me as boss?

SEDLAROVA. Let's hear Strandzha's speech!

TSIKO. Well, I'll be damned!...

SEDLAROV. Shush-shh!

SEDLAROVA. Strandzha's speech!

TSIKO. Who's this Strandzha woman, Mitko? The moment I ask anything and your aunt goes: "The Strandzha speech, do the Strandzha's speech!"

SEDLAROVA. You have to know it by heart. Otherwise I will fail you.

SEDLAROV. I think you're wrong, aunt. That's from a public high-school curriculum. (*To Tsiko.*) Technical college, is that where you graduated from?

TSIKO. Didn't graduate from anywhere. Come on, Mitko, you can arrange this Greece thing for me.

SEDLAROV. I can't arrange that sort of thing.

TSIKO. You're a man of the arts – people know you all over Bulgaria. You can arrange anything.

SEDLAROV. And what are you going to do in Greece?

TSIKO. I'm just gonna go give my wife a beating and I'm back the next day.

SEDLAROV. Oh, I see. And she? What is she doing there? In Greece.

TSIKO. She? She's with some old fart, handling his balls...

SEDLAROV (*interrupting*). Shush, enough!

TSIKO. I'll just give her a beating and I'm back.

SEDLAROV. We don't need visas for Greece anymore.

TSIKO. But they stopped me and turned me back at the border.

SEDLAROV. A good thing they did.

TSIKO. She got my flat, the fucking bitch. Now – in the morning got to catch the bus, in the evening on the bus again – to get back. The work I get, I get in town. When I get it. How much work you think there is in this village here?

SEDLAROVA. There was this song about shirts: "Galounka In The Yard".

Look just how the simple folk put it: "Galounka In The Yard". And so on. And then:

I'm sick and tired, Godran,  
Sick of washing bloodstained shirts.  
God smite you, Godran!

It doesn't say anywhere that this Godran is a haidouk but it's understood from simple words – "bloodstained shirt". And look at the contrast: God – Godran – he's an outlaw, runs from God. God smite you, Godran. The image you get of the haidouk is quite lopsided sometimes – a hero, a protector of the common

man. Yet most of them were simple bandits. I want you to consider what you yourselves think about things. Be more independent! Your homework for next time is: The Dramatic In Bulgarian Folk Songs.

SEDLAROV. Got that. We'll do our homework.

TSIKO. So, Mitko, we were sitting with Tall Thin Todor in the “Thorn Bush Tavern”, don't know if you know him - Tall Thin Todor – he used to work in the bank for a bunch of years, got kicked out of the bank, we'd had about four or five drinks, rakias. I was fixing his plumbing for him. And we're drinking rakia and he says to me, Tall Thin Todor: You Tsiko, he says, one should get a hefty stick and bash you on the head for days and not tell you why. You're still young, he says, and strong, why do you waste your time with pipes and plumbing and shit. He says: There's people in your village, they can help you, these people in your village. And do you know who he meant, Mitko, Tall Thin Todor, you know who he meant?

SEDLAROV. Whom?

TSIKO (*points with his index finger at Sedlarova*).

SEDLAROV. All right, cheers, let's talk about something more sensible.

TSIKO. The factory is hers, Mitko, the factory is hers. With all the machines in it and everything. Three thousand people worked there in that factory before I got kicked out, now there's no more than a hundred, but the machines are still there, all of them, old and new.

SEDLAROV. And Aunt Maria is the owner?

TSIKO. The factory's privatized in her name. (*To Sedlarova.*) Won't you just appoint me as a guard there, missus? You'll give me thousand levs, that's all I want.

SEDLAROVA. Sure. But who were you?

TSIKO. I am Tsvetan, Tsiko. The masterhand. I'm fixing up your bathroom.

SEDLAROVA (*to Sedlarov*). Is that him?

SEDLAROV. Who?

SEDLAROVA. Chekhov. Volume Five.

SEDLAROV. Aunt!

SEDLAROVA. If he's taken it to read, all right, but I think he's taken it for his fireplace.

SEDLAROV. Your books are in Pleven, aunt. You have no books here.

SEDLAROVA. Chekhov. Volume Five.

*A car horn is heard.*

3.

TSIKO. Son of a bitch fuck!

SEDLAROV. Who's that?

TSIKO. The Worshipper. I've never seen him with this jeep. He's coming to you.

SEDLAROV. Come on!

TSIKO. He's never stopped in the village. I'm not kidding, he's coming to you.

*From upstage left the voices of quarreling people are heard.*

WORSHIPPER. And don't snigger like that – you're getting on my nut!

RADOSLAV. I'm not sniggering.

*The Worshipper, Radoslav and Zvezdelina appear.*

WORSHIPPER. You're sniggering. And you're sniggering at her.

RADOSLAV. At her? Sure.

WORSHIPPER. Apologize.

RADOSLAV. Come on!

WORSHIPPER. Apologize now!

RADOSLAV. Come on, Worshipper!

WORSHIPPER. Apologize to the bitch. Now!

RADOSLAV. I apologize, Lina.

ZVEZDELINA. You're real swine, both of you. *(To Sedlarov.)* Mitko, we bring some great news. *(To the Worshipper.)* It's time you got introduced to each other.

THE WORSHIPPER *(stretches his arm out for a handshake)*.

SEDLAROV. Sedlarov.

THE WORSHIPPER *(examines him)*. You were best in... what was it called. "The Golden Tooth". I've seen it twice.

SEDLAROV. That was Getz in "The Golden Tooth". I was still a student then.

THE WORSHIPPER. Getz, yes. He was in this other movie – "The Peasant in the..." what was it?

SEDLAROV. "The peasant In The Mercedes".

THE WORSHIPPER. Hey, are you pulling my chain?

SEDLAROV. Am I?

ZVEZDELINA. Mitko!

THE WORSHIPPER. Tell him what it's all about.

ZVEZDELINA. Bogomil has this offer...

THE WORSHIPPER. Not here!

SEDLAROV. I called the Theatre Center in the Ministry this morning. I'm giving up the Artistic Directorship offer.

THE WORSHIPPER. You can't give it up.

SEDLAROV. Is that so?

THE WORSHIPPER. This town needs a theatre.

SEDLAROV. Well now, that is news to me. That this town needs theatre.

RADOSLAV. Mitko, don't fuck around. The Worshipper is offering a juicy deal.

ZVEZDELINA. Let's go to the summer house.

THE WORSHIPPER (*harshly turns to Tsiko*). What are you staring at me for, eh? Got something to say?

TSIKO. No. (*Gets up and taking the bottle of beer goes back inside the house.*)

## 4.

SEDLAROVA. Where's the inspector woman?

SEDLAROV. Aunt Maria's asking about your mother.

RADOSLAV. She stayed behind to do some shopping with the bodyguard.

She'll come, grandma, she'll come.

SEDLAROVA. Your father, Boyko, has lots of sins but that he brought you up so bad – I will never forgive him, ever, not even in the other world. He'll brag that you speak languages and that he arranged for you a job as diplomat in Moscow. A son whose mind it doesn't cross to send his mother a letter, not even once a year, is no son.

RADOSLAV. I'm not your son, I'm your grandson. Boyko's in the graveyard.

The prosecutor too.

SEDLAROVA. If your father wasn't a prosecutor, you'd have been in jail for juvenile delinquents. Because that girl was raped, there's no use of you denying. And you're hanging around with thugs again.

ZVEZDELINA. Shit!

SEDLAROVA. (*to the Worshipper*). Your feet smell, boy. Get out of my sight and don't come back! (*Exits.*)

## 5.

THE WORSHIPPER (*to Radoslav*). Where did you bring me, dude?!

RADOSLAV. She mistakes me for my father and my grandfather, and who knows who else with. (*To Sedlarov.*) Mitko, what'll we do with her?

SEDLAROV. Why don't you sit?

THE WORSHIPPER (*without sitting*). It's my principle, Sedlarov, not to finance culture but sports. Still, Zvezdelina twisted my arm and so you get money for two...

ZVEZDELINA (*interrupts*). Three.

THE WORSHIPPER. Two! I'll cover the cost of the plays.

ZVEZDELINA. Two productions. On the main stage.

SEDLAROV. Mister Milev. I agreed to take up the theatre if a chamber stage was built.

THE WORSHIPPER. There'll be no chamber stage.

SEDLAROV. Is that so?

THE WORSHIPPER. Where do you plan this stage to be built?

SEDLAROV. Where it's been planned. In the south wing.

THE WORSHIPPER. I have another contract for the south wing.

SEDLAROV. Which has run out.

THE WORSHIPPER. Which will be renewed.

SEDLAROV. That won't happen.

THE WORSHIPPER. Are you sure?

SEDLAROV. I won't renew it.

THE WORSHIPPER. If you won't renew it, I'll get somebody else to renew it. But, still, it best be you.

6.

*Veneta enters carrying a big plastic bag. A few steps behind her is This Time.*

VENETA. I got bananas. Mother Maria should eat bananas. *(To Sedlarov.)*

Mitko, we need some advice. We got into some trouble.

RADOSLAV. What trouble did you get into?

VENETA. It wasn't the boy's fault at all.

THIS TIME. I wasn't speeding, no more than sixty this time.

VENETA. And she came out of nowhere to cross.

THE WORSHIPPER *(to This Time)*. I'm gonna kill you!

VENETA. It wasn't the boy's fault. It was the hen's fault. What do you expect of a hen.

RADOSLAV. Hen? Was it fowl or woman? Eh, Mom, what did you run over?

VENETA. What woman, Slavi? She 's in the trunk.

THE WORSHIPPER *(to This Time)*. You ran over a hen. Is that what you did?

THIS TIME. Yes, boss.

THE WORSHIPPER. And why the heck'd you put it in the trunk?

THIS TIME. The missus.

VENETA *(to Sedlarov)*. It happened in front of the gate of the old man we were talking about before. Otherwise the dogs would have gotten to it.

THIS TIME. I kicked it three times, the damn gate, wouldn't budge. Thought to throw it over the fence this time. No go.

VENETA. He's an old man, a hen is a big deal for him. We can give it to him on the way back, can't we, Mitko, eh? Tonight.

SEDLAROV. I don't know. I guess.

THE WORSHIPPER *(to This Time)*. Now you'll leave the Volvo, go sit in the jeep and stop bothering me with stupid shithead fowl stories.

RADOSLAV. This time.

*This time exits.*

SEDLAROV. Still, I suggest you sit down.

*Only Veneta sits.*

ZVEZDELINA. Mitko, you can't imagine what furore took place, when they found out that you're taking over the theatre. I was supposed to sing in Vididn on that day but there was this rain over the stadium and Niki and the Tally found me, they found me at the hotel – what utter misery – both of 'em guards in some storehouse, remember how hilarious they were in the “Caucasian Chalk Circle”, and they say – let's go. I got in touch with Vihra Velikova, she does an odd part from time to time but dumb stuff. And she said she'd come. She came all the way across the country. You have no right to do that!

SEDLAROV. What do you mean – I have no right? What now – are you doing a Mother Theresa act? I have no right, she says.

THE WORSHIPPER. Dude, don't be like that!

SEDLAROV. Excuse me?

THE WORSHIPPER. I said – don't be like that.

ZVEZDELINA. Bogomil, please!

RADOSLAV. In such cases a time-out is asked for. I have family matters to discuss with Mitko. Then we'll come to you in the summer house.

THE WORSHIPPER. The sports Academy, when I graduated, we had this banquet downstairs in the Tavern of the “Baikal”. And this little shit from the next table – some actor, a faggot, is being a wise ass. It all began because of some whore. First I stuck his head in a vase – to munch on some carnations and then I pinned him down. His dad turned out to be some big shot. That night they beat me to a pulp down at the precinct, the coppers. But that actor shithead never came back to town.

*Pause.*

SEDLAROV. Yeah, you really scared me now.

THE WORSHIPPER (*suddenly towards This Time who has recently approached and is standing a few paces away.*) What d'you want!

THIS TIME. This little old granny came outa here, asked the Lizard about this Strandzha guy, wouldn't go away, made the Lizard real mad this time.

SEDLAROV (*to Radoslav and Veneta*). Go see what's going on with Aunt Maria.

VENETA. What lizard?

ZVEZDELINA. The bodyguard. The other one.

THE WORSHIPPER (*to This Time*). Get lost. We're going. (*To Sedlarov.*) I wasn't scaring you, Sedlarov. Just don't want you to get all cocky. (*To Zvezdelina.*) Let's go!

ZVEZDELINA (*while going out*). Could you think of something stupider to say?

THE WORSHIPPER. You watch your mouth!

ZVEZDELINA. How about I get in the car and speed off to Sofia?

THE WORSHIPPER. You'll get in the car, eh? You know what you'll get? Humped by me, that's what you'll get!

*Radoslav walks after them.*

8.

VENETA. What a lout.

TSIKO (*from the door, looking towards the village square*). Jerk!

SEDLAROV. Didn't you say you were friends.

TSIKO (*keeps looking*). The whole pub's come out to watch. Just having stopped in the village once.

SEDLAROV. And why was this guy being cocky with you like that?

TSIKO. We used to sell newspapers, him and me, in the nineties.

SEDLAROV. Newspapers?

TSIKO. For three days. Froze our asses off. And in the autumn I see him – in a silk suit, a mobile phone to his ear, they weren't all common then, and a BMW – brand new.

VENETA . And so?

TSIKO. What is it, madam.

VENETA. What follows from all of this?

SEDLAROV. Veneta, don't scold my masterhand.

VENETA. I'm not scolding him, it's just I can't stand Bulgarian envy.

TSIKO. How shall I arrange the tiles, eh Mitko? The ones with the ornaments. Crisscrossed or in communist fashion – in straight lines?

SEDLAROV. Really, have you already gotten to the tiles?

TSIKO. I haven't, I was just asking. To be politically correct, you see. (*Goes inside.*)

VENETA. Well, he's one smart peasant, isn't he.

SEDLAROV. Why peasant? There's no peasants any longer in Bulgaria.

9.

RADOSLAV (*coming back from the street*). Mitko, look at things practically. For you after all, what's most important is the theatre to get going.

SEDLAROV. Get going where? It seats a thousand people. That building was built for party conferences not for theatre.

RADOSLAV. Yep, but Zvezdelina filled it up without a problem, just like that.

SEDLAROV. She filled up, sure – doing turbofolk. When Zvezdelina was an actress, the best anybody would let her do was some bit part in a children's play.

RADOSLAV. She thinks the sky of you. Drove the Worshipper up the wall talking about you.

SEDLAROV. You're right – I'm talking rubbish.

RADOSLAV. Don't mind him all that much.

SEDLAROV. Enough now.

VENETA. He's not a bad a bad boy, a bit of a simpleton, that's all. Well, it's the truth, Slavi.

RADOSLAV. A bit? Had it ever crossed your mind that you could depend on somebody like that one day, Mitko?

SEDLAROV. I don't know. How much do you care?

RADOSLAV. During my father's second mandate we were in Finland. And I couldn't believe my eyes what kind of money the state gives for theatre.

VENETA. Well, it was the same thing here. You have to admit it, Mitko, you were the state's beloved pets.

RADOSLAV. He personally wasn't quite that.

VENETA. I'm not talking about him. *(To Sedlarov.)* When you were sent away from Sofia we were behind you. You can't imagine what arguments we had with some of those sent on missions out of Bulgaria. Boyko even.

RADOSLAV. Come on now - rubbish. My father and theatre.

SEDLAROV. What will we do with Aunt Maria?

VENETA. You know we've always been distanced from one another. She – in the province, we – in Sofia or wherever. All begins with that war that they waged in the past over Boyko's custody with my father-in-law. When he was alive Boyko did for his father what he could. Now it's my duty to take care of his mother.

SEDLAROV. Is that all?

RADOSLAV. What else?

VENETA. Of course, in the old folks' home she would feel as well as here, when your mother was looking after her. Mitko, I am so sorry again that we couldn't make it to the funeral. We'll go on the Fortieth Day.

SEDLAROV. The forty days have come and gone.

VENETA. Dear Lord! There is really no excuse for us.

RADOSLAV. This, of course, won't be one of those old folks' homes of the old kind that used to be run by the state, urine stained beds.

VENETA. It's a private establishment.

RADOSLAV. Naturally it costs an arm and a leg but I don't want to be cheap.

SEDLAROV. As far as I could gather it was actually a state home that you were talking about.

RADOSLAV. Only in the very beginning, until a place opens up at the other place.

SEDLAROV. I see!

RADOSLAV. He says 'I see.'

VENETA. Completely convinced that these nouveau riche idiots will cut up into pieces the old woman and sell her for scrap.

SEDLAROV. I've seen your grandfather's old house with the fountains in the yard. Why do you think I consider you nouveau riche?

RADOSLAV. But me you consider that way.

SEDLAROV. I don't much like this familial conversation.

RADOSLAV. Well, I am one of those who managed to grab the wind by the reins. Because, unlike you, I have never believed in utopias. I was born later, so I excuse and acquit you.

SEDLAROV. You excuse and acquit me?

RADOSLAV. I do.

SEDLAROV. This old man wants to marry Aunt Maria.

VENETA. Who?

SEDLAROV. Old Tihomir.

RADOSLAV. No, come on!

SEDLAROV. Old love. They used to be in high school together. Aunt Maria graduated Literature, he, I don't know, don't know what on earth he did or where he went. This is how I remember him – like an owl in that house. At some point they wanted to take it from him – to make a museum of it, they would have given him that new one on the other side. But he said no. They offered him money – he still refused. He sits inside all day, if he goes out it would only be at night.

VENETA. Now I remember. Your mother showed him to me one night. He's supposed to know foreign languages.

SEDLAROV. No way, he couldn't. I mean, could you stay locked in for a hundred years and study on your own foreign languages. Still, his house is full of books. I haven't seen them, only once did he deem to talk to me. I was a student, a hot night during the vacation, I was sitting at that bench over there in the square and he came.

VENETA. Excuse me, Mitko, but why are you carrying on about this crazy guy?

SEDLAROV. Crazy as in mentally ill he isn't. From a judicial point of view there is no problem.

RADOSLAV. What is there no judicial problem about?

SEDLAROV. This here is the house that she was born in. What will she do in Sofia?

RADOSLAV. Wait, you said: There is no judicial problem.

SEDLAROV. I did say that.

RADOSLAV. You mean to marry that crazy guy?

SEDLAROV. He isn't crazy.

RADOSLAV. The thing is, that you can't be the one to decide this.

SEDLAROV. What is it I can't decide?

RADOSLAV. Whether she will marry or not.

SEDLAROV. Of course. Neither are you.

VENETA. You simply hate us and want to mess things up for us. That is what you want.

SEDLAROV. Wouldn't it be easier for you if she just lived here and care for and be the care of the old man?

RADOSLAV. What is it with that smirk though?

SEDLAROV. Was I smiling?

RADOSLAV. I'll just tell this guy here, the mayor, not to allow madness like this and will be over and done with.

SEDLAROV. The mayor is not a he but a she. I too could tell her a few things myself.

RADOSLAV. You can be sure that she, that mayor, will listen what I have to say.

SEDLAROV. Oh, really!

RADOSLAV. Yes.

SEDLAROV. The game gets rough. Is it so important to part Aunt Maria from her property?

RADOSLAV. What will we do, Mommy? Lets go to the Worshipper.

VENETA. We have no claims on that house. You can have it.

SEDLAROV. I am not talking about the house. I'm talking about the factory.

RADOSLAV. I see.

SEDLAROV. I'm talking about the factory.

RADOSLAV. What do you care about this factory?

SEDLAROV. Nothing. I'm not my aunt's inheritor.

RADOSLAV. What is it you want then?

SEDLAROV. I want you to leave her alone. (*Short pause.*) You mean to say that she is just a phantom owner and she knows nothing of it? And she doesn't know that such a large factory is privatized in her name.

RADOSLAV. Are you sure she still knows her own name?

SEDLAROV. She does. It wasn't necessary for you to sign instead of her. How do you people do these things? There's all those documents, notaries, signatures, IDs?

RADOSLAV. We do them as we please.

SEDLAROV. Well now I will tell you something. I think the old man has a son someplace. If they marry, that same son may become inheritor.

RADOSLAV. Is that so?

SEDLAROV. Yes, it is.

RADOSLAV. Do you know who the actual owner of the factory is?

SEDLAROV. You of course.

RADOSLAV. Apart from me.

SEDLAROV. Oh, there's another owner then?

RADOSLAV. There is. His name is Bogomil Milev. Known as the Worshipper.

SEDLAROV. Aha.

RADOSLAV. Don't mistakenly take him for the lamb he seemed just now.

SEDLAROV. Are you trying to scare me again?

RADOSLAV. You just take care of the little theatre. That's all.

10.

SEDLAROVA (*appears with a huge bouquet of yellow flowers*). Trollop, that's what they call this flower in these parts, Trollops. How can you call a flower with such an ugly name? Trollop.

*Goes inside, comes back out with a glass jar. The other three watch her silently.*

SEDLAROV. Want some water?

SEDLAROVA (*starts arranging the flowers*).

Sie brachte Blumen mit und Früchte,

gereift auf einer anderen Flur.

Who'll translate this to Bulgarian?

VENETA. Slavi?

RADOSLAV. Can I hear it one more time?

SEDLAROVA. Sie brachte Blumen mit und Früchte. Brachte is a verb.

RADOSLAV. She brought flowers and fruit.

SEDLAROVA. Excellent! In the next line the word Flur might give you a hard time. Remember: Flur means corridor, entrance-hall. But it also means cornfields, meadows, farmland. It's in the feminine gender.

RADOSLAV. I have a question. May I?

SEDLAROVA. Yes. What is it?

RADOSLAV. What is your name?

SEDLAROVA. Sorry?

RADOSLAV. Your name, what is your name?

*Sedlarova looks at him with eyes opened wide. She seems to find it difficult to answer.*

RADOSLAV. Your first name at least? Your name?

SEDLAROVA. Now? You mean now?

RADOSLAV. Well, no. Not now. When you remember it. (*Stands up. To Veneta.*) Let's go.

VENETA (*stands up*). The bride will have to answer when they ask her. For example, she may have to give her name.

SEDLAROV. We'll manage. That mayor lady was in my class at school. (*While the two start to leave.*) There was this one rule in driving: If you hit a hen at great speed and you don't stop, you are not to blame. But if you stop and put it in your trunk – you're guilty.

VENETA. Do you really think we'd bother to steal the old man's hen?

SEDLAROV. What hen? I am talking about utopias, you see. And about the privatization.

RADOSLAV. That's a metaphor, Mom. You don't understand that kind of thing.

*They leave. The horn of their car blares.*

11.

TSIKO (*comes out from inside*). Mite, she's very pretty, that one. The singer.

SEDLAROV. Is she now?

TSIKO. She took my breath away the other day, at the stadium.

SEDLAROV (*points at a crate.*) Beer?

*Tsiko opens a bottle for himself.*

12.

DZHURKO *appears. He is dressed in a tight in the shoulders jacket and a white (from afar at least) shirt. On it a multi-coloured tie with a large knot. Carries an axe in his hands.*

- I'm ready, Mitko!

TSIKO. Where to, eh? With this axe.

DZHURKO. About the axe, later. (*He props in on the chair*). Did we let her slip, eh, Mitko? The lady.

SEDLAROV. Which lady?

DZHURKO. The one from the television.

SEDLAROV. You smell, man. Of sweat. (*To Tsiko.*) Give him a beer. (*To Dzhurko.*) Stay there.

DZHURKO. I'm wet all over. It only took me five minutes to climb the hill. And just five minutes to get dressed. I'm ready.

TSIKO. I lied to him that morning, that those relatives of yours, in the car, are from the television. He wants to appear on televisio.

SEDLAROV. I know. He was here yesterday.

DZHURKO. I'm very good at it, you know, Mitko. Very good.

SEDLAROV. Good at what?

DZHURKO. At fucking, I'm great.

TSIKO. Who are you fucking now? Ghana?

DZHURKO. Tsona.

TSIKO. Oh? But she's decrepit!

DZHURKO. Decrepit, but... What to do with it. (*Touches himself between the legs.*)

SEDLAROV. I didn't understand why you didn't cut the tree as my mother asked you. Why just half of it?

DZHURKO. Because I got tired then, Mitko. Very tired.

SEDLAROV. So. For a whole year you couldn't cut down a dead tree, but to become an actor you can.

DZHURKO. So what? Is it all that hard?

SEDLAROV (*gets up*). Drink your beer and go cut the elm down. I wonder how it hasn't fallen by now, and killed somebody. (*Goes out.*)

13.

TSIKO. So you cut the elm in half, then you say "give me twenty leva." How much did you ask for?

DZHURKO. I haven't asked, Tsiko, not much. I haven't even asked.

TSIKO. Yes, you have. The woman wasn't stingy.

DZHURKO. May she rest in peace!

TSIKO. We haven't watched you only on TV so far. So we'll watch you, too?

DZHURKO. Why not? Am I not good enough?

TSIKO. You are, you are, but I have to teach you some things. For instance, Mitko; do you know what he is – Mitko?

DZHURKO. Sure do. An actor.

TSIKO. Not an actor. A director. Do you know what that is. A director?

DZHURKO. He sure can get me in, but doesn't want to.

TSIKO. This tie around your neck, for example. It isn't enough to just put on a tie.

DZHURKO. I've collected fifteen of them. And the doctor promised to give me his own.

TSIKO. You've got fifteen but this one, if you wash it, a kilo of dirt will come out of it. Its not enough to just wear a tie. Go stand there. Stand there!

DZHURKO. What? Why, Tsiko?

TSIKO. Stand there, I tell you! Those who got out of the car, they're coming, don't you see? They too are from the television. Stand there.

DZHURKO. What shall I do?

TSIKO. Raise the axe now. Higher, higher, higher. That's it! And look straight ahead, like a monument. As if you are a partisan. That's right. Don't move!

14.

*Tony and Vihra appear.*

TONY. What's going on here? Who is this man?

TSIKO. This man is an actor. He's rehearsing.

TONY. And who are you?

TSIKO. I'm the director.

VIHRA. Mitko has seen us. (*Shouts loudly.*) Mitko!

TONY. What a damn dumb trick!

VIHRA. Isn't this Dimitar Sedlarov's house? His relative's house?

TSIKO. That's the house but he isn't here. Got lost somewhere, he did.

*The two of them are watching Dzhurko.*

TONY. How long is he going to stand like that? Did he make him do that?

DZHURKO. I can go on even longer. As long as you say.

TSIKO. Put down the axe, you nincompoop!

15.

*The bodyguard This Time appears.*

THIS TIME (*from afar*). Hey, dude! You there with the axe. Come here.

TSIKO. You're in luck.

THIS TIME. Don't stare at me. Come here.

*Dzhurko tentatively takes a few steps towards him.*

THIS TIME. I've got a white hen in the trunk. Take it and give it to the mayoress over there.

DZHURKO. Who, me?

THIS TIME. Yes, you.

DZHURKO. Why me?

THIS TIME. Who then? Me, I'm not going to deliver your hens this time.

DZHURKO. Tsiko! What shall I do now? Eh, Tsiko?

THIS TIME. You get the hen and deliver it. That's what you do. Not for me, carrying your hens about.

TONY. What are you, anyway?

THIS TIME (*to Dzhurko*). Go now!

TONY (*to Tsiko*) Who is this one?

*Tsiko shrugs his shoulders, not sure.*

TONY. What do you want of this man?

THIS TIME. You shut up!

TONY. What?

THIS TIME. Shut up, I said.

TONY. Get lost!

THIS TIME. I'll whip your ass, pussycat. I'll whip your ass. This time, I'll whip your ass.

VIHRA (*grabs the axe from Dzhurko's hand*). Whose ass do you plan to whip, you! Whose? Do you know who you're talking to? Do you?

TONY. Vihra!

VIHRA (*with increasing rage*). How long are they going to terrorize us? Walk all over us. How long? The greatest idiots in Bulgaria!

THIS TIME. What a fucking nutcase!

16.

SEDLAROVA (*from the right*) Don't swear, boy!

THIS TIME. Now this one, too!

SEDLAROVA (*enters*). When God wants to punish someone, He first takes away his reason. Ajax from the Trojan War. I give this example to all my students. A nation can come to no good destroying its intelligentsia. Plain people, uneducated people. They would close schools, they need no music, they need nothing. (*To Tony.*) I've already seen you somewhere, girl. Haven't I?

TONY. Hello. Sorry about what happened here.

THIS TIME. So what do we do this time?

TSIKO. Don't look for the mayoress here on a Sunday. If you want her, she lives at the end of town, near the Iron Bridge. Seven minutes from here – I've checked it with my car, with the Lada.

THIS TIME. You've checked your dick, is what you've checked. *(To Dzhurko.)* And you, why have you wrapped yourself up in this suit in this heat, eh? Fuck you for a moron! *(Goes out.)*

17.

TSIKO. This one quite defiled you at the end, Dzhurko. How are you to become an actor now? Maybe not.

DZHURKO *(takes the axe)*. I better go cut down the elm.

TSIKO. Go, cut it down.

SEDLAROVA. What elm?

DZHURKO. The elm.

SEDLAROVA. Don't you dare!

DZHURKO. But it's old, Madam. That tree. Why not cut it down?

SEDLAROVA. I'm old, too.

DZHURKO. So?

SEDLAROVA. What so?

TSIKO. Don't mess with him. Don't. He might use the axe. *(To Dzhurko.)* Walk away, you! Walk across the square, go! Get away from here.

DZHURKO. I'll go sit on the bench over there.

TSIKO. Sit where you like.

SEDLAROVA *(to Tsiko)*. What about the books? When are you going to return my books?

*Dzhurko goes out.*

TSIKO. What books? I'm Tsvetan. Tsiko. The one you're to employ to run the factory. I'm now fixing up your bathroom.

SEDLAROVA. How long will you take to fix it up? You're so lazy, you lazy-bones. *(To Tony and Vihra.)* Come over here, you can see better from here.

VIHRA. See what, Madam?

SEDLAROVA. Tihomir's house.

*Tsiko walks inside grinning.*

18.

SEDLAROVA. We've come to terms with Tihomir. He'll come to live here. People would laugh. Let them laugh. The important thing is to preserve the house. Sit down here, sit. There's a shirt they call the Hanging Shirt...

TONY. Excuse me, Madam. We're looking for Mitko. Dimitar Sedlarov.

SEDLAROVA. I'm his aunt.

TONY. I know. We had coffee together with you a couple of days ago. It was very pleasant.

VIHRA *(holding out her hand)*. I'm Vihra Velikova. I've worked with him in a theatre. Many years ago.

SEDLAROVA. When you sit down to discuss this problem, just tell them: This is a house in the Renaissance style, from the time of the Turkish Yoke. Tihomir, he is a strange old bird; full of books, up to the ceiling. He let me in once, he doesn't let anyone in otherwise. I walked in like that, sideways – the door doesn't open all the way... Because of the books. An owl! He sleeps during the day, goes out in the night with the donkey. You think he reads them? He doesn't read them. The books. We'll get rid of the books, a good repair and – the

collection. Most important – the collection. There’s this shirt with embroidery. They call it the Haging Shirt.

19.

SEDLAROV (*from outside*). Stop! I’ll tell them about the Hanging Shirt.

VIHRA. Mitko!

*Sedlarov walks in.*

VIHRA (*rushes to him eagerly. Hugs and kisses.*) So you welcome me with an axe, eh?

SEDLAROV. An axe?

TONY. We had an accident. To begin with, we were pulled out of the ditch with a rope.

VIHRA. I drove Tony’s car, as she had had a vodka at the wrong time. I dare not drive fast – somebody else’s car; I was driving with 60-70 behind a container truck. There’s oncoming traffic and a BMW is pushing me from behind, the asshole honking and honking. It happened after the bends – have you ever had somebody elbowing you in the back – he finally elbowed me into the ditch, the faggot. Some BMW!

SEDLAROV. Is that the one?

VIHRA (*turns to face the street*). No, it isn’t. This is the other one.

TONY. This one we slaughtered with an axe a while ago.

VIHRA. I’m still shaking. Why is the idiot coming back?

TONY. Mrs. Sedlarova, he stopped in front of the house.

VIHRA. With a hen! He’s entering the yard with a hen. What’s that hen, Mitko?

SEDLAROV. Oh no! (*Reaches for the mobile phone left somewhere around.*)

Excuse me for a second. (*Dials a number.*) Slavi, this is ridiculous... Well,

you've sent the boy to take the hen to old Tihomir... He won't open the door, I told you he's a strange bird... If it wasn't you, it was your mother sent him... I'm I'm joking, I think I don't need to explain... Of course I'm not a public prosecutor... Listen, I don't know about the marriage, that's their own business... Really?... You frighten me again you know... No. That won't do... Come on, take it easy!... (*Stares at the phone as if they abruptly hung up on the other side.*) Darn!

TONY. What's going on?

SEDLAROV. Vihra, it's no good! No good at all. You've made the long journey all for nothing.

VIHRA. Wait a little! I don't want you to employ me.

SEDLAROV. Neither am I employing. I'm going back to Sofia. It's no good.

TONY. You can't go back. I've engaged those two from the Drama College and Victoria from Burgas, you can't go back.

SEDLAROV. What have you engaged them for?

TONY. How what for?

SEDLAROV. To compete with the porn industry? Thanks, but no thanks. The battle is lost.

TONY. You know full well there's no sex crap in the project.

SEDLAROV. I know. That's why we'll perform for fifteen people.

TONY. It won't be fifteen.

VIHRA (*to Sedlarov*). Did you know I meet Toothy?

TONY (*as Sedlarov does not react*). What toothy?

VIHRA. He was the president of... what do you call it... RCAC. The Regional Council For Arts And Culture. At that time artistic councils were held to decide whether to approve a performance, and they always sent their representatives; and before a premiere Toothy delivered an indictment. Against me. And against Mitko, of course. He had... his front teeth were like those of a walrus. About erotica. Bourgeois erotica, or something. I played a mixed up writer, a quite

hysterical one. Mitko had come to the idea – I would take off my stockings on a bare mattress on the bare stage. A hysterical fainting fit – it was fabulous. That much – five centimeters above the knee. Garters could be seen, too, for a split second. You won't believe – the foaming at the mouth, Toothy: "What kind of night club act is this?! This is an act of bourgeois – no, of ideological sabotage. Who are you working for in this way?" Five centimeters, Tony! Five centimeters above the knee. Mitko, apparently you don't dare look at my knee. SEDLAROV. I'm looking. So what?

VIHRA. Just that I met him. Toothy. At the airport. I had gone to meet my sister. And do you know where he is now? In Russia, for the last fifteen years. He hasn't come back after the changes, they found him there when they came about, working for some agency; never mind, guess what he's doing now. You sure won't guess. A chain of night clubs with striptease. In Russia. Striptease. Tony! Five centimeters above the knee. And they cancelled the production.

SEDLAROV. What now? Shall I cry because there's no Toothy to cancel my productions?

VIHRA. Good times.

SEDLAROV. It wasn't cancelled because of your knee. The charges were different.

VIHRA. I know.

TONY (*to Sedlarov*). I'll let you go on talking of old times but before that we should decide where you'll meet the other three. I promised to let them know today.

VIHRA. She doesn't miss the chance to have a dig at my age. She was as wicked, even as a child. I couldn't make her go to sleep in the evening, not before her mother would come back after a performance.

TONY. I've heard that before as well.

VIHRA. Her mother and I doubled in the same part in "Tartuffe" so we can take care of her. Cry-baby!

TONY. I wouldn't have come here but you don't seem to switch on your phone all morning.

SEDLAROV. I can't find lodgings for the three of them.

TONY. You can.

SEDLAROV. How? The old boss would not vacate the one-room apartment.

TONY. The one-room apartment is for you. The mayor promised a two-room one.

SEDLAROV. The mayor insists that I sign a new contract with Bogomil Milev – the Worshipper. For the South wing.

TONY. Sign it.

SEDLAROV. So where will you act? Your project is for a chamber stage, after all.

TONY. I don't care. I want those three people.

VIHRA. I expected you to say: I want Vihra Velikova.

TONY. Sorry. I don't feel like joking.

VIHRA. I didn't know I was a joke. Nature's joke. Mitko, is my position absolutely hopeless?

20.

*Sedlarova enters carrying a tray.*

VIHRA (*rushes to take the tray from her*). God, what beautiful cups!

SEDLAROVA. I brought them over from Pleven. Lenkov, when he came to take away his things, took everything away. Go on, I said, take everything, the power is with you, take everything but don't touch these cups. I didn't give them to Lenkov.

VIHRA. Who's Lenkov?

SEDLAROVA. My husband.

SEDLAROV. The action takes place fifty years ago. A divorce between a young teacher and a district judge.

SEDLAROVA. He wasn't a judge, he was a public prosecutor.

SEDLAROV. Are you going to drink coffee again?

SEDLAROVA. Why not? I've made enough for everybody.

SEDLAROV. Because you already had some.

SEDLAROVA. No, I haven't.

SEDLAROV. You and I had coffee just a short while ago.

SEDLAROVA. You may have, I haven't.

SEDLAROV. Okay, you haven't.

SEDLAROVA. He doesn't let me drink coffee. (*Drinks up.*) He took away my son but I didn't give him the cups.

TONY. If you're not ready with an answer, I can call them in the afternoon. Just don't switch off your phone.

*Silence.*

VIHRA. The flowers are beautiful too.

*Silence.*

SEDLAROV. Shall I bring water?

SEDLAROVA. For me?

SEDLAROV. No, for the trollops.

TONY. Wow!

SEDLAROV. That's what they call these flowers around here. It's daft.

TONY. You're quite inadequate today. What's going on?

SEDLAROV. I went for a walk down, there's a gully. I didn't feel better.

SEDLAROVA. Once these two music orchestras had a fight. The orchestra from our village and that from another village – someone hired them and they wouldn't back out. Who's to play for the ring dance. Real battle! There was a man, Dochko, a very decent person, Dochko. He had studied music, knew all about notes, tried to stop them. Notes, who cares about notes. They just blow in their pipes and that's it. They fought and fought, and then started to play together, all of them together. Two cornets, two bass drums, two small drums. A long round dance. We should put a bagpipe in Tihomir's house, and also some of those instruments – the wind instruments, some old cornet too.

VIHRA (*to avoid another silence*). What about the icons? Are there icons in the church? Or it's been looted too? Like everywhere else.

SEDLAROV. Don't get worked up now, drink your coffee in peace. If she hasn't stuffed it with sugar.

VIHRA. Why not? My grandfather was a priest.

SEDLAROV. My aunt is one of the progressive Bulgarian teachers. Those who fought against religion – this opium of the people. And against King Alcohol.

SEDLAROVA. On the Day of the Forty Holy Martirs they go to the woods for dry twigs. Women and maidens. And they carry forty dry twigs each. They tie banners to the twigs – each twig with a banner. And in the evening they sing from the rocks above the village. On the highest point they sing, on the Maiden's rock. That's what that peak is called – the Maiden's rock.

SEDLAROV. The Bachelor's.

SEDLAROVA. The Maiden's.

SEDLAROV. The bachelors.

TONY. Don't tease her.

SEDLAROV. She hasn't lived here. She's forgetting.

TONY. Maybe you've forgotten.

SEDLAROV. Okay. The highest point on the rock is called the Maiden's. Right, auntie?

SEDLAROVA. The Bachelor's.

TONY (*to Sedlarov*). Stop it! I want to listen.

SEDLAROVA. The Bachelor's is where the bachelors climb up to on Shrovetide to whirl around wickers. A wicker – you wouldn't know – is a kind of basket, but ball-shaped. And filled with straw. They tie a long wire or a creeper – something like a long rope, and set fire to the straw, then whirl the wicker. Shots, fire, the whole rock is lit up on Shrovetide. By the wickers.

TONY. What about masks? Did you make masks?

SEDLAROVA. If a wicker tears off from up there, it darts whizzing over the village. A house burnt once on Shrovetide. Right below the Maiden's.

SEDLAROV. Below the Bachelor's. Didn't we agree that this rock is called the Bachelor's. The one where the bachelors whirl the wickers.

TONY. It's burning even now.

SEDLAROV. What?

TONY. That house. It's burning.

SEDLAROV (*gets up and looks out to where Tony is looking.*) Tsiko!

VIHRA. God, what fire!

21.

*Suddenly a bell starts tolling. Distant and near voices. A woman screams.*

DZHURKO (*rushes upon the stage*). Tsiko! Give buckets! Old Tihomir is burning! Give buckets!

TSIKO (*appears from inside*). What is it, eh? (*Looks out.*) Fuck, what fire!

A CRY FORM OUTSIDE. The old man is inside! The old man's inside! Take out the old man!

*The stage empties quickly.*

SEDLAROV (*on the mobile phone*). Slavi, you won't get away with that! Not this time, you won't get away, neither will he. . . From where you are don't you see how it burns?.. Don't act the fool. The man you sent to go in there, everybody saw him. . . You all won't get away with that, I'm telling you.

*Throws the phone on the table and runs out.*

## PART TWO

*The same place. A few hours later.*

1.

*Vihra is holding a compact, trying to see in the mirror a tooth deep in her mouth. Sedlarova comes out of the house with a carton box in her hand.*

VIHRA. I've never seen such a horrible thing. I have the feeling I'm to blame. Everything is going wrong with me all day. We got a sandwich each to have a quick bite and the filling fell off. Damn, what a day!

SEDLAROVA. Has the girl left?

VIHRA. The girl's here. She went with Mitko to fix the car. The girl's here.

SEDLAROVA. Not a drop of rain the whole summer.

VIHRA. So many firemen not to be able to get a man out of the fire. How is he going to be buried now? There's nothing left to be buried.

SEDLAROVA (*hands her the box*). You asked about photos, didn't you. Here are the photos.

VIHRA. I never asked about anything Mrs. Sedlarova. (*Takes the box.*)

SEDLAROVA. If it had rained, the rain might have put it out, but not a drop. All summer. What shall we do now?

VIHRA. Quite a horrible thing.

SEDLAROVA. If he had got to the porch, he would have jumped down, but he didn't.

VIHRA. How do you jump at that age?

SEDLAROVA. It doesn't open. The door doesn't open. Because of books. And he sleeps. During the day, and works in the night. With the donkey. What shall we do now?

VIHRA. Mitko syas that he was a little younger than you.

SEDLAROVA. Who, Mitko?

VIHRA. No. Old Tihomir... May he rest in peace.

SEDLAROVA. “The Power Of Darkness”. Let’s do, he says, “The Power Of Darkness”. By Tolstoy. Do you think our people will understand it?

VIHRA. Who’s to do “The Power Of Darkness”?

SEDLAROVA. Tihomir, a performance. With the students.

VIHRA. I see.

SEDLAROVA. We are twenty-five of us, high-school students. Tolstoy!

Nonsense. Even the vacation won’t be enough.

VIHRA. I too want to play in “The Power Of Darkness”. If there’s someone to produce it.

SEDLAROVA. I hand in my part to you.

VIHRA. Which part?

SEDLAROVA. Mine.

VIHRA. Thank you. (*Points to a photo.*) Is that you? With the beret.

SEDLAROVA. Since you ask for photos, here’s photos.

VIHRA. I haven’t asked but became curious.

SEDLAROVA. Lenkov took mine away. All of them. These are my brother’s.

VIHRA. It seems he took everything away, this Lenkov.

SEDLAROVA. My brother was an electrician. Fell of a post.

VIHRA. It must be quite frightful, divorcing a prosecutor. I’ve got divorced twice, but not from a prosecutor.

SEDLAROVA. I was correcting the tenth grade term papers on “The Character of Strandzha”. Essays in literature. I had three more to do. And I had cooked dolmas – he liked dolmas. And he comes home smiling. You haven’t had a drink again, I say, you’re gleeful today as never. I’ve done, he says, a good deed.

Seven. And shows me seven fingers. Seven. Seven death sentences. For espionage. What espionage in this God forsaken town – who did they spy on?

He ate two helpings of dolmas, lay down and went to sleep on the spot. Smiling. Seven death sentences. I only took the essays. Twenty corrected, three not corrected. And Boyko. Boyko, I say, we're going to your aunt's.

VIHRA. How old was he?

SEDLAROVA. He took him away from me, came with milicamen.

VIHRA. My God!

SEDLAROVA. That's how, with miliciamen.

VIHRA. Tanya was five when I divorced.

SEDLAROVA. You remember what a good boy he was?

VIHRA. No, I don't, I only know Mitko.

SEDLAROVA. Hooligan. Knew foreign languages, he says. So what if he did?

VIHRA. So he is Mitko's cousin. Your son.

SEDLAROVA. He was here today in the morning. With a woman.

VIHRA. Who?

SEDLAROVA. Boyko.

VIHRA. As far as I know it was your grandson who was here. With your daughter-in-law.

SEDLAROVA. Maybe it was. (*Looks out of the yard.*) Why is this house still smoking? They put out the fire, didn't they?

VIHRA. It would go on smoking until tomorrow morning, they said.

SEDLAROVA. What shall we do now? They are coming again.

VIHRA. Who?

SEDLAROVA (*points out*). They are coming for me.

VIHRA. Who, Mrs. Sedlarova?

SEDLAROVA. The car. They're come to get me.

VIHRA. Don't be afraid.

SEDLAROVA. I'll hide now. Don't tell them I am here.

VIHRA. All right.

SEDLAROVA. Don't give me away.

VIHRA. Not to worry.

*Sedlarova goes out.*

2.

ZVEZDELINA (*bursts in*). You idiot! Why didn't you call?

*They kiss.*

VIHRA (*looks outside the yard*). Is it you driving this monster?

ZVEZDELINA. You were going to call, weren't you?

VIHRA. How call, when you hide in this tank.

ZVEZDELINA. Rubbish.

VIHRA. Dark windows, too. Weren't dark windows in cars banned?

ZVEZDELINA. Don't make me laugh. That's Bogomil's jeep.

VIHRA. He trusts you a lot. This morning I chose to drive someone else's car and I messed up.

ZVEZDELINA. Vihra, you look great.

VIHRA (*skeptically*). Come on. I don't wonder about you. And yet how do you do it?

ZVEZDELINA. I do nothing.

VIHRA. Indeed! You looked like that when you were twenty.

ZVEZDELINA. Well, I'm not fifty yet, am I? (*Her mobile phone rings.*) Hello... He's not here... Relax, don't yell at me... All right. (*Puts away her phone.*) It can't be helped, Vihra, the profession obliges.

VIHRA. Obliges what? To drive a jeep with dark windows?

ZVEZDELINA. I had bought a white one. Japanese. At the beginning, when I had started to sing. Do you know what happened?

VIHRA. It never crossed my mind that you would become a singer.

ZVEZDELINA. Every night after the concert I get into the white jeep, feeling very important – as if I’m in Hollywood, start it up and drive off. It happened on Buxton Boulevard, right after the crossing. O-o-ps, a car in front of me. It blocks the road. Like that – perpendicularly. Three thugs jump out. “Get out of the jeep.” Why? “Get out, I tell you!” I got out. And the jeep flew away, my white jeep.

VIHRA. What about money? Jewelry?

ZVEZDELINA. Oh please, Vihra, I wet my pants!

VIHRA. Really?!

ZVEZDELINA. I stand there, in my wet pants. on Buxton Boulevard at midnight – no money, no jeep, no phone, and nobody to call.

VIHRA. How about that one, your boyfriend?

ZVEZDELINA. No boyfriend, not yet. That’s what I’m telling you. It was then I met him, it was he who had to find my car. That’s how it happened.

VIHRA. What about the three guys who took your car?

ZVEZDELINA. What about them?

VIHRA. I’ve heard they break the legs of that kind of petty thieves.

ZVEZDELINA (*with a smile*). Their legs?

VIHRA. When I recall how children liked you when you played a bunny.

ZVEZDELINA. I don’t feel like playing a bunny.

VIHRA. What’s important is that you sing.

ZVEZDELINA. I didn’t play a bunny in Mitko’s shows, you know that.

VIHRA. Well, yes.

ZVEZDELINA. Did something happen?

VIHRA. Like what?

ZVEZDELINA. Come on now.

VIHRA. I got a part.

ZVEZDELINA. Really? What part?

VIHRA. "The Power Of Darkness" by Leo Tolstoy.

ZVEZDELINA. Fantastic, Vihra! Is he going to do it?

VIHRA. No.

ZVEZDELINA. Who then, the little one? She can't.

VIHRA. Old Tihomir is staging it. The charred old man, may he rest in peace. Mitko aunt thinks it's 1942. And all of us here are high-school students in vacation. And she turned her part over to me.

ZVEZDELINA. Some cuckoo!

VIHRA. That's right, Lina. Who'd give me a part now? Don't you see what I look like?

ZVEZDELINA. I've got to talk to him.

VIHRA. There's no use.

ZVEZDELINA. He's taken it into his head that Bogomil and Slavi have set fire to the old man's house. Bogomil's in a fury.

VIHRA. Is that why you came?

ZVEZDELINA. Yes.

VIHRA. He's now at the service station with Tony.

ZVEZDELINA. I know. (*The telephone rings.*) Okay... I got it... I prefer to wait here for him... I told you not to yell at me! (*Puts away her phone.*)

VIHRA. What do they want from him?

ZVEZDELINA. I don't know. Keep out of it. It's pretty awful.

VIHRA. What shall we do? He's gone quite crazy. Apparently he doesn't realize what times we live in.

ZVEZDELINA. This thing keeps smoking.

VIHRA. They are waiting for the roof to collapse, they say. The slates on the roof were too heavy or something. The firemen didn't dare go in.

ZVEZDELINA. Bogomil and Slavi talked to chief of police. Short circuit.

VIHRA. Oh!

ZVEZDELINA. It was a short circuit that did it.

VIHRA. Just my luck with directors, isn't it. He got burned up, poor old man.  
God, shame on me!

ZVEZDELINA. Why should you be to blame?

VIHRA. Don't try to talk him out of anything. It'll get worse.

ZVEZDELINA. You think so?

VIHRA. The fact that you screwed him once or twice in the past means nothing.

ZVEZDELINA. You know that, too?

VIHRA. Oh, please!

ZVEZDELINA. And this young one – what's with her?

VIHRA. They went to the service station.

ZVEZDELINA. I'm not asking about the service station.

VIHRA. I don't know. They give each other these looks, they fight. How should I know.

ZVEZDELINA. I think he's completely gone off his head lately.

VIHRA. Lina, why don't they let him tend to his theatre? Tell them.

ZVEZDELINA. Let him tend to it. But he wouldn't.

VIHRA. This factory was bought for a Lev.

ZVEZDELINA. What factory?

VIHRA. You must know about it!

ZVEZDELINA. Well, that's how much factories go for nowadays.

VIHRA. And then they sell them for millions.

ZVEZDELINA. Vihra, don't go into politics now, please.

VIHRA (*looks at her watch*). If they don't come soon I'll miss my train.

ZVEZDELINA. Do you know about the wedding?

VIHRA. What wedding?

ZVEZDELINA. Mitko's aunt, the cuckoo, and the burned old man, God rest his soul, were to get married.

VIHRA. My God!

ZVEZDELINA. Yes.

VIHRA. Tony mentioned something while they were putting out the fire. She knows. God, what a tragicomedy!

ZVEZDELINA. It's not a tragicomedy. Vihra, why don't you talk to him?

VIHRA. Me? With Mitko? What about?

ZVEZDELINA. To up and go back to Sofia.

VIHRA. And give up the theatre?

ZVEZDELINA. It's for the best.

VIHRA. Well, didn't you... Didn't you say you wanted him to give a part?

ZVEZDELINA. I did.

VIHRA. And all of that because of this thing with the two old people?

ZVEZDELINA. Not that. I told you, it's just awful.

VIHRA. Here they are.

3.

TONY (*from outside*). Vihra, we got ten minutes! We'll make it!

ZVEZDELINA. Go.

VIHRA. No, I can't go like that.

SEDLAROV (*appears*). Have you got anything to fetch? Did you bring anything?

VIHRA. My brains. Not too much of them either. Lina!

ZVEZDELINA. Go. I'll manage.

*Vihra hesitates. A car horn sounds..*

ZVEZDELINA. Go!

*Vihra exits with Sedlarov.*

## 4.

*Doors slam of an obviously not new and not too noiselessly pulling away car.*

SEDLAROV (*enters*). Vihra insisted for me to go with them to the station. What is it?

ZVEZDELINA. Are you aware how many years have passed since we last stood face to face like that?

SEDLAROV. And what of?

ZVEZDELINA. Absolutely nothing?

SEDLAROV. Don't tell me you've come for a date?

ZVEZDELINA. I came to see Vihra. I heard she was here.

SEDLAROV. Good.

ZVEZDELINA. Is there nothing at all left in you? After all we were together quite some time.

SEDLAROV. Do you realize how old I am?

ZVEZDELINA. I'm not twenty-two either. Like I was then.

SEDLAROV. What are we talking about now?

ZVEZDELINA. Woman's curiosity. I want to know what's left. When I pass by that inn at the Tenth Kilometer I always remember – you know what. I want to know what's left over of you after all these women you've been with.

SEDLAROV. Nothing.

ZVEZDELINA. Nothing?

SEDLAROV. Just idiocies.

ZVEZDELINA. Like what?

SEDLAROV. Oh, come on!

ЗВЕЗДЕЛИНА. What do you remember?

SEDLAROV. Stop it.

ZVEZDELINA. No! I insist you tell me.

SEDLAROV. You insist?

ZVEZDELINA. I do.

SEDLAROV. I remember you had diarrhea. I drove the Lada allegedly with maximum speed but there was something wrong with the engine and you kept shouting “Faster, please, faster if you please!”

ZVEZDELINA. Then what?

SEDLAROV. Later I saw a brown spot on your panties. In the room. You weren’t able to hide it.

ZVEZDELINA. Just that then?

SEDLAROV. Just that.

ZVEZDELINA. That I had diarrhea and shit my pants?

SEDLAROV. I only remember that sort of things with women. The rest is one and the same. Physiology.

ZVEZDELINA. And you think I believe you?

SEDLAROV. If you wish.

ZVEZDELINA. Me, I was ashamed.

SEDLAROV. Nothing to be ashamed of.

ZVEZDELINA. I was ashamed during that year, ashamed that I loved you so much.

SEDLAROV. I’m thirsty. I got beer. I’ll get some beer. (*Goes out.*)

5.

THE WORSHIPPER (*enters*). Now what?

ZVEZDELINA. I only got the chance to do one quick blowjob. No time for more. You came too soon.

THE WORSHIPPER. If I slug you one you’ll be gathering your teeth from here to that hen-house over there!

ZVEZDELINA. Yeah, and who will you boast with after that? When I appear on the posters toothless like some Thai prostitute.

THE WORSHIPPER. You'll be off the posters. There'll be no more posters.

ZVEZDELINA. This no longer depends on you.

THE WORSHIPPER. Yes it does. You'll be gone in no time.

ZVEZDELINA. It seems that womankind is the hardest creature on earth to repulse.

THE WORSHIPPER. What's that?

ZVEZDELINA. I'm wondering how I can drag around with you all this time. And not be repulsed.

THE WORSHIPPER. Did that faggot tell you all this?

ZVEZDELINA. This guy that you call names is so much more a man as you couldn't imagine.

THE WORSHIPPER. Now, do you know what's going to happen now?

ZVEZDELINA. What will happen now?

THE WORSHIPPER. I'll fuck you right here, on this table I'll fuck you. You can call him to watch.

ZVEZDELINA. I hope so! I hope you can finally get it up. I pray to God for it! *(She senses she's gone too far and jumps up, puts her back to the wall and holds a chair in front of herself.)* Sweetheart, don't! You know I talk like that I want you. Please! You can hit me later. Not now!

6.

SEDLAROV *(enters)*. Something wrong with the chairs? Shall I bring another chair?

THE WORSHIPPER. This one here says you got balls of steel. The way I see it, you ain't.

SEDLAROV. You're right.

THE WORSHIPPER. I plan to fuck her on this table. Will you prop up my balls.  
SEDLAROV. And will you shut your shitty mouth for a bit?

*The Worshipper starts towards him.*

ZVEZDELINA. Dear, don't!

7.

RADOSLAV (*appears on the left*). Are you still here, eh? What was all the hurry about?

VENETA (*comes after him*). It was I insisted to leave. I want to get to Sofia in the daylight. Mitko, where's Mother Maria?

*The Worshipper turns abruptly towards them. Then walks out. Zvezdelina hesitantly waves her hand as if for a farewell. They walk out.*

8.

RADOSLAV. Nothing's right. Things are not right in this country. So you couldn't reach an agreement?

*Sedlarov is silent, does not look at the two of them.*

RADOSLAV. I told you not to get too uptight. He's a sportsman. Turn him whichever way you like, he's an oaf.

VENETA (*peeps down into the basement, takes a few steps towards where the yard and garden are.*) Mother Maria! (*Goes out.*)

RADOSLAV. It doesn't work, the love between art and capital doesn't work in this country. It doesn't.

SEDLAROV. Capital or cannibal?

RADOSLAV. What's that?

SEDLAROV. Does it smell to you of something?

RADOSLAV. Of what?

SEDLAROV. Can't you smell the smell of a baked old man?

RADOSLAV. Yeah... About the old man again. Why don't you come down to earth, you and your theatrical phantasmagoria. How do you imagine I go and set fire to some bed-wetting old man?

SEDLAROV. The factory is no bed-wetting thing.

RADOSLAV. The factory is trash.

SEDLAROV. You settled the matter with the police, too. Short circuit.

RADOSLAV. Mitko, I have nothing to do with that fire.

SEDLAROV. Then why did you try to threaten me this morning, why did you threaten me with this moron?... The one who was here a while ago.

RADOSLAV. He sure is a moron. There's something I want to tell you and I want you to get me right. Time's up for those boys. Clubs, fists and arson don't work anymore.

SEDLAROV. The great plunder is over, you mean.

RADOSLAV. It's called primary accumulation of capital.

SEDLAROV. I know what it's called. Only it isn't over yet. The plunder.

RADOSLAV. What was your salary at the starting line? When the big race began.

SEDLAROV. I haven't taken part in any race.

RADOSLAV. And you should have. What was your salary?

SEDLAROV. As much as everybody's.

RADOSLAV. Plus a small fee from time to time. How many years would it take you, say, to buy the State Metalurgic Plant? Would a hundred thousand be enough?

SEDLAROV. One lev. I could have given it at once. The plant was sold for a lev.

RADOSLAV. Anybody could have given one lev. How was the system to be changed if everyone became an owner? You were for changing the system, weren't you?

SEDLAROV. This partner of yours, or business-partner, as you call him, why has he built his summer house on this bare spot? Eight kilometers out of town, by this forlorn village.

RADOSLAV. Why? It's a nice village.

SEDLAROV. Those who understand the devisish schemes say that if you don't want to be listened in or watched by clever little devices, you've got to be far off other buildings. If someone watches him at all.

RADOSLAV. Is that so?

СЕДРЛЯРОВ. Well, yes.

RADOSLAV. I don't comprehend devilish schemes.

SEDLAROV. Come on, don't be so modest. You do.

RADOSLAV. So what?

SEDLAROV. I've been coming over quite often lately, haven't I, what with my mother's death and this idiotic appointment. I see posh cars coming, bypassing the village and driving up straight there. It seems they come to worship your Worshipper.

RADOSLAV. Very interesting.

SEDLAROV. They say – bit this is a pack of nonsense, don't laugh, they say that here is where drugs are distributed for this half of Bulgaria. Go and try to persuade them that things don't happen that way.

RADOSLAV. And how do they happen?

SEDLAROV. I don't know. How do they?

RADOSLAV. Mitko.

SEDLAROV. Yes?

RADOSLAV. What was that performance called, the one where the actors played blacks, with rings and bracelets on their legs. Great fun! I know people line up for tickets at five o'clock in the morning. Shakespeare. Some Shakespeare I think.

SEDLAROV. Yes. Shakespeare.

RADOSLAV. Why don't you do that kind of thing now?

SEDLAROV. I don't know. Maybe I can't.

RADOSLAV. But you think you can do this?

SEDLAROV. Which one?

RADOSLAV. Play Sherlock Holmes.

SEDLAROV. We've got to decide what to do about Aunt Maria. Things have changed.

RADOSLAV. Mother is trying to talk with her.

SEDLAROV. So – short circuit.

RADOSLAV. What?

SEDLAROV. Short circuit.

RADOSLAV. I really had to call the police. After this – excuse me, infantile reaction of yours.

SEDLAROV. I've completely forgotten what I knew of physics. To cause a short circuit the two poles need to come into contact, right?

RADOSLAV. Two bared wires need to come into contact.

SEDLAROV. Because I imagined that you and I are something like two poles. But we sit and talk and there's no spark between us. No fire, no explosion.

RADOSLAV. Not a good thing, fires.

SEDLAROV. Has the old man burned out already? They said that they'd take him out tomorrow. It was not safe to mess around with the building now.

RADOSLAV. Mother!

VENETA (*from outside*). Coming!

SEDLAROV. Why don't you stay until tomorrow? The old man may come out well done and tasty. Ask over your friend too.

9.

TONY (*right after entering*). Are you ever going to turn on that mobile phone of yours?

SEDLAROV. Sorry.

TONY. The train was twenty minutes late. It's a waste to hurry.

SEDLAROV. Sit for a while.

10.

VENETA (*comes in*). Well, well! Where did this pretty girl come from? Mitko, what's going on here?

RADOSLAV. Are we leaving?

VENETA. I picked some quinces. I love the smell of quinces in the house. (*To Tony.*) Would you like to try them?

TONY. No, thank you.

VENETA. Mother Maria doesn't want to talk to me at all. I'm already at a loss. I'm about to give up. It's a hopeless case.

RADOSLAV. There's two case. This one here is even more hopeless.

VENETA. Which one?

SEDLAROV. Me...

VENETA. What is it?

SEDLAROV. Nothing. I asked Slavi to come for a feast and he got angry.

VENETA. Really? What are we to feast on?

RADOSLAV. I'll tell you on the road. Go now.

VENETA. Oh, don't be like that!

*Radoslav takes the plastic bag from her.*

VENETA. Come on, Slavi.

RADOSLAV. Walk before me.

*They leave.*

VENETA. I don't like such relations between relatives.

SEDLAROV. Wait now, we can't leave the old woman like that.

*Veneta stops.*

RADOSLAV. Go, I tell you.

*They go out.*

11.

TONY. No, really, what is going on here?

SEDLAROV. I've been diagnosed.

TONY. At log last. And what's the diagnosis?

SEDLAROV. There's something beautiful in this fire. All day. Like a ritual funeral. He considered himself a follower of Tolstoy. Can you imagine it – at the beginning of the twenty first century. After the end of what not, today the last Tolstoist in the world got burned.

TONY. I have the feeling that you are thinking about everything else but about what we came to this town about.

SEDLAROV. What did we come about?

TONY. So that's how it is.

SEDLAROV. And I have the feeling that I've played soccer with two extra times, and the match is over, and a player who had just warmed up says: "Come on are we starting?"

TONY. After two extra times footballers usually lie flat on the grass and can't move. Why don't you lie on your back too? Right here, for instance.

SEDLAROV. What do we do? Do you want me to make coffee?

TONY. Theatre. I'd want us to make theatre.

SEDLAROV. All the same, I'll make coffee.

TONY. Don't you have some bottle in the fridge?

SEDLAROV. Grape brandy.

TONY. Good.

*Sedlarov sets off.*

TONY. Wait! I'll drive won't I?

SEDLAROV. You can stay.

TONY. Here? No.

SEDLAROV. During the wars there were all kinds of speculators and profiteers. They supplied soldiers with food not fit to eat and arms not fit to fire and what have you, they lined the pockets of their full-bottom breeches, was it, or their pants with government money. Does anybody know their names now? Their houses are right on those streets of Sofia which are regarded as aristocratic, some aristocrats! There's no plaques on the houses describing the marauding. And these crooks here and now are robbing us blind and in a few years we'll act as if nothing ever happened. Monkeys yesterday – aristocrats tomorrow. So what do I do? Chew over that great thought that at the bottom of each wealth there is a crime.

TONY. Vileness. I think that's how Balzac put it.

SEDLAROV. Or that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. All right, so what next?

TONY. Isn't there something else to serve for making theatre?

SEDLAROV. There isn't.

TONY. Is that so?

SEDLAROV. To me – there isn't.

TONY. What we were occupied with last night, for instance, isn't all together in the sphere of the socio-political. Do I express it properly?

SEDLAROV. So what?

TONY. You were inspired.

SEDLAROV. Oh yeah?

TONY. Want me to show you the marks?

SEDLAROV. Come on, no need.

TONY. I'll just take off my blouse.

SEDLAROV. Right then – Nature has made sure that two things don't stop happening: eating and reproduction. Eating doesn't make a show. Since only fucking is of interest means that we've hit the very bottom.

TONY. There's another word for what you call fucking.

SEDLAROV. I asked a student to go over the play-bills of the theatres in the last years. Every second title tries to thrust its hand between the legs of his majesty the theatregoer. Because it's only there that he is sensitive.

TONY. At last.

SEDLAROV. What?

TONY. At last I am about to believe you're getting old. Isn't that what you're trying to make believe so I leave you alone?

SEDLAROV. Tony!

TONY. What?

SEDLAROV. This is sick.

TONY. What?

SEDLAROV. You and me. The difference between us is a thousand years.

TONY. I don't care about fools my age. I've told you this a hundred times.

Impotent at that.

SEDLAROV. Are they all impotent?

TONY. You want me check them all?

SEDLAROV. You don't need me.

TONY. Leave it to me to decide what I need.

SEDLAROV. I'm out of the game. There's nothing I could be of use to you with.

TONY. I don't you to be of use to me. I'll manage with my profession on my own. (*Short pause.*) What are you expecting of me now? To tell you you're not of the game? Or you'll be back in it soon again? Because you're still the best... the best... the best. Is that what you want? Do you realize how vain you are?

SEDLAROV. I do but you don't.

TONY. Or beg you: "Just a little longer! Let us go on, please. Just a little bit longer! I beg you! With this difference in age! There – that's sick indeed.

SEDLAROV. No one will beg anyone about anything. We call it quits and that's that. Finished.

TONY. Stop it!

SEDLAROV. When it all started it was... I don't know... curiosity... or just my own imbecility.

TONY. And my own imbecility.

SEDLAROV. But, well, many years have passed.

TONY. And we have to put a stop to it. For I need another circle of friends. I need to mix with young people. Not waste my best years with you. I've already heard all this. Is there something else you could tell me?

SEDLAROV. Isn't that enough?

TONY. It's rubbish.

SEDLAROV. There's more.

TONY. That I should have children? Could you at least give me a break about that?

SEDLAROV. Why give you break?

TONY. Because you can't imagine how I hate you at such moments. And I don't believe you! I don't believe you. I don't!

SEDLAROV. What is it that you don't believe?

TONY. All right, tomorrow you'll see me with someone else. Do you know how easy it is? I'll find somebody who'll get you smarting the most. If that's what you're looking for.

SEDLAROV. Good.

TONY. Are we done this time again?

SEDLAROV. What?

TONY. Talking rubbish.

SEDLAROV. For a long time I've tried to realize what this feeling actually means and I did in the end. That last night with you, or no, on the following day. With those colleagues of yours – those boys and girls.

TONY. What did you realize?

SEDLAROV. It's like with a car. You drive, there seems to be no problem as you've been driving for years and suddenly this horrible insecurity. As if you can't see. As if headlights blind you on the motorway. As if you shouldn't drive at top speed but you can't reduce speed, either. The motorway demands it and so does the car.

TONY. What on earth are you talking about?

SEDLAROV. I'm talking about you.

TONY. Am I the car?

SEDLAROV. You are. A fast car, a fine car, but it's no longer for me.

TONY. Well, you've never said such a thing to me.

SEDLAROV. Why do you think this funeral today shook me so? This fire, I mean. It was as if I was buried. A kind of vile, slow, low burning. Slow, slow, but in a little while the day is over. The end. No more fire, no smoke. The end.

TONY. That's crap. Complete crap.

SEDLAROV. Sure.

TONY. You can still make theatre.

SEDLAROV. I'm asking you again – what for? Eh? What for?

12.

SEDLAROVA (*enters*). I remembered, Mitko, I did! You were asking me about the words of a song.

SEDLAROV. I've not asked you about anything.

SEDLAROVA.

I'm sick and tired, Godran,  
Sick of washing bloodstained shirts.  
God smite you, Godran!

I've started to forget lately.

SEDLAROV. It's all right, you'll be all right.

SEDLAROVA. This woman came to pick quinces. I let her. She wants me to go to Sofia. What do I do in Sofia? Boyko's wife. Boyko's wife, that's who it was.

SEDLAROV. It was her. Your grandson Radoslav was here too. They left.

SEDLAROVA. They left?

SEDLAROV. They left.

SEDLAROVA. What shall we do now that Tihomir burnt? I'll go see.

SEDLAROV. See what?

SEDLAROVA. If it starts raining, the rain will put it out, but it doesn't, it's too early for snow. I'll go see.

SEDLAROV. Go.

*Sedlarova goes out.*

13.

SEDLAROV. Did you see what I did now?

TONY. I don't understand.

SEDLAROV. One of these days I'll clear off from here. What'll this old woman do alone?

TONY. They'll find a younger woman to take care of her. What will it cost them to pay this woman? A mere flea-bite.

SEDLAROV. They won't do that. They want her in Sofia.

TONY. To throw her away in some old-folk's home, to die there in a few days.

SEDLAROV. No, they need her alive for now. It looks like that's part of the graft.

14.

*Enter Tsiko and Dzhurko. Dzhurko carries a bag of cement.*

TSIKO. Step, step, step! Dudelike, ok? Walk upright. That's how. So the girl likes you. So she makes you a big brother on television.

DZHURKO. Here?

TSIKO. How so, here? The cement goes inside. Now the other one too!

DZHURKO (*after coming out from inside*). If I strain myself I can carry two at a time. I've done it.

TSIKO. If you strain yourself you'll fart. Bring the other one now.

*Dzhurko goes out.*

15.

TSIKO. So you're asking me about the old man, Mitko. I did the water main for him in spring. Bare wires everywhere. Let me, I said, repair your installation. But he wouldn't. Short circuit it was.

SEDLAROV. Short?

TSIKO. Short.

SEDLAROV. Then everything is all right. Since there's a witness.

TSIKO. A witness? What witness?

SEDLAROV. Before the police, I say.

TSIKO. What police, eh? You think they'll really care. (*From inside now.*) Will you tell me where to move the tap to? Mitko, I'm asking about the tap.

DZHURKO'S VOICE (*from outside*). Tsiko! Run this way! Tsiko! Run!

*Outcries are heard from outside.*

TSIKO (*comes out.*) What happened again?

16.

DZHURKO (*rushes in from outside*). Old Tihomir! Old Tihomir!

TSIKO. What now?

DZHURKO. Old Tihomir! Coming down from the woods. With the donkey.

TSIKO. I told them. I told them the guy might have gone out early in the morning, but they – no, inside, he's inside. I told them.

DZHURKO. Aren't you coming to see him?

TSIKO. What's there to see? Old Tihomir.

*Dzhurko goes out. Tsiko disappears inside.*

17.

TONY. Won't you go?

SEDLAROV. Yes. Come.

TONY (*gazes out*). Your aunt. In the square.

SEDLAROV. What?

TONY. Your aunt. Don't you see her?

SEDLAROV. Have you got your mobile phone?

TONY. Yeah.

SEDLAROV. Let me have it. (*Dials.*) It's me. Me again. I've got something to tell you. The cannibal breakfast is postponed. The old man hasn't burnt. He's alive. Just so. He came back a short while ago, with the donkey. Well, there's one more thing... Careful now, watch the road so you don't miss a bend: You'll have to come for a wedding... Wedding, I said. You're kin after all... All right, pleasant journey and think about a wedding gift!

TONY. Do you think that's possible?

SEDLAROV. What?

TONY. For them to get together. And that one – the son or whatever of the old man to have a claim on the graft?

SEDLAROV. Nonsense.

TONY. The why do you go into the whole thing?

SEDLAROV. Why not make them mad?

*They start to go.*

SEDLAROV (*stops*). Wait. This crazy day can't end like that.

TONY. Are you going to call them again?

SEDLAROV. No, I want to get Tsiko mad too.

TONY. Him? How are you going to do that?

SEDLAROV. Him, with Beethoven.

*Turns the cassette recorder to full volume. The two of them exit. The violin concerto sounds.*

THE END