

Lauris Gundars

CLOSED CIRCLE

A play

Translated by Margita Gailitis

Cast of Characters

MARK
CLARK
TAMBOURÉE

A long table and chairs. The table is overloaded with food. The choice, however, is limited. The most obvious thing is that the amount of food is exaggerated. (In place of three loaves of bread, there are thirteen, etc.) MARK and CLARK are sitting at the table, eating. Their manners are somewhat coarse. Interspersed with the following dialogue are various commands and phrases natural to sharing a meal (e.g. "Pass...", "Cut me a piece...", "Pour...", etc.) – these are to be improvised, and, therefore, have not been written into the text.

MARK Don't worry about it.

CLARK I agree. It's nothing.

MARK Shit.

CLARK Shit!

MARK Shit.

CLARK For sure!

MARK Stinky and runny.

CLARK Dead on.

MARK A shit cake, yeah?!

CLARK (*laughs*) For sure.

MARK A shit cake, I tell you! Your turn! ...A shit cake ...

CLARK With whipped cream roses on top!

MARK Not bad!... And chopped old horse balls...

CLARK ...in mayonnaise.

MARK No, that doesn't fit.

CLARK ...with a rotten beet-root at its end.

MARK What end?

CLARK Well, you know ... that ...

MARK (*caught up with a sudden idea*) Listen! On the average, ninety centimetres long ... What's it ... in my trousers?!

CLARK (*confused*) A penis...

- MARK Therefore – a penis - on the average, ninety centimetres long! A sort of marzipan steak!
- CLARK What are we talking about?...
- MARK A muscle, ten centimetres in diameter, or thereabouts?!
- CLARK I can't recall what we were talking about any more...
- MARK And at its end a milk fountain!
- CLARK *(still trying to remember)* Is it about work maybe? ...
- Mark suddenly falls silent and starts to eat again. A pause.
- MARK *(suddenly)* You could have saved your worries for later!
- CLARK *(apologetically)* I sometimes feel that I become ... how shall I say...
- MARK ... impolite.
- TAMBOURÉE enters. She also sits down at the table and begins to eat.*
- MARK *(to Tambourée)* Is your bladder empty?
- CLARK *(to Tambourée)* Hello.
- As if not having heard the men, Tambourée keeps silent.*
- MARK *(to Clark)* I always say: there are two places you have to come to with an empty bladder – the table and the bedroom.
- TAMBOURÉE *(after a moment, sounding bored)* Where is your bedroom now?
- MARK *(laughing, to Clark)* Well, right now it's hard to say. *(to Tambourée)* To the left of the toilet!!!
- TAMBOURÉE *(still calmly)* At one time it was to the right of the toilet.
- MARK You see! To the left or the right ... but still near the toilet. *(to Tambourée)* And is there anything wrong with this room? It's warm enough! What do you say to that? Eh?! Hey?!!!
- TAMBOURÉE Neigh!

- MARK Neigh! N-e-I-gh! N-e-i-gh!*(laughs loudly)* N-e-i-gh! *(to Clark, encouraging him to participate)* N-e-i-gh!...
- CLARK N-e-i-gh!... *(also laughing)*.
- Tambourée continues to eat. After a while the two men calm down and again start eating.*
- MARK The very same thing happened to me when I was young. I oozed out at the table like a bag with a hole in it.
- CLARK What are you talking about?
- MARK I said – the bladder has to be empty. In two places – at the table and in the bedroom. *(after thinking for a moment)* Well, in any room, for that matter. *(after further thought)* In the garden too. And in the shed. In the garage. And on the train. And in the WC on a plane ... *(to Tambourée)* Have I forgotten anything?
- TAMBOURÉE *(still bored)* In a pigsty.
- MARK Yes! In a pigsty too. Generally, you see, how it is, you have to have an empty bladder. I hadn't thought it out fully. I recall the bedroom from my childhood. My brother on his wedding night entered the bedroom with a full bladder. Climbed on top of his little bride, but there was a sudden decrease in pressure, and he – right there and then – piddled on her. No matter what, the bladder will have its own way.
- CLARK *(thoughtfully)* Yeah. An unfortunate accident.
- MARK Do you think my brother let her sleep?! Mouth open and “Forward march, to America!” *(laughs)*.
- Clark has to laugh too.
- TAMBOURÉE *(after a moment, her tone still indifferent)* Brazil ...
- MARK *(gestures to illustrate)* Forward march! Puerto – go, Rico – march! Puerto ... Rico ... Puerto...
- TAMBOURÉE ...Los Angeles ... Your brother pissed himself before he got to the bedroom. Forced her to parade naked in front of him all night long. And even with that, he couldn't raise it. She nearly smothered him with her arse.

MARK Smothered whom! Whom did she smother? Were you standing over them?! But I stood there! In the morning my brother and I drilled a hole in the wall, so I could see everything. That's precisely why they didn't turn out the light. Ask the old man! I also invited him. *(to Clark)* She doesn't particularly like my brother. When he passes her, he always slaps her on the behind. *(laughs)* Crude, for sure...

Also Clark starts to laugh, but Tambourée does not interrupt her eating.

TAMBOURÉE He is so fat that he can't even lift up his arm. His eyes are hidden in pouches of fat. He can't even see my behind.

MARK A big strong guy ... but the thin ones aren't whimps either! *(takes a tomato (depending on what is on the table), squeezes it and as the juice and seeds spatter in the air, he laughs. To Clark.)* Well! *(Clark doesn't seem to understand what Mark expects of him.)* Well! ...*(to Tambourée)* Take it easy! Your own shouldn't betray you!

Not paying the least bit of attention to the men, Tambourée continues to eat.

MARK *(to Clark)* Well, what're you waiting for!

CLARK I? ... Me too? ...

MARK *(whispers in annoyance)* Are you a man or aren't you?!

Clark also takes a tomato and, his eyes shut, attempts to squeeze it. Finally the tomato splits open.

MARK *(to Tambourée)* You see! *(to Clark)* And this is what you're capable of?! *(laughing, rubs the squished tomato across his face).*

Clark has to follow suit.

MARK *(to Tambourée)* Almost the colour of shit, isn't it?! Well, tell me! Is it the colour of shit?

Tambourée continues to eat in silence. Mark, his mouth smeared, reaches forward for a kiss, leaning closer and closer to her.

MARK Is it the colour of shit? *(Tambourée tries to ward him off, but after a noisy bout of wrestling, Mark manages to press his lips to Tambourée's face. To Clark)* Now you!

CLARK *(Pretending he doesn't understand) Who, me? (as if unintentionally, he starts to wipe his face in his sleeve).*

MARK Now you!

CLARK *Me? (his face already clean) Oh, me! Yeah, sure! (Extending his lips toward Tambourée).*

MARK *(snaps) Stop! (Glumly stares at Clark. A pause.)*

CLARK I really didn't mean to ... I didn't know, I'd just cleaned off ...*(tries to laugh, but Mark, annoyed, is silent)*

Silence. Mark munches loudly.

CLARK *(with exaggerated enthusiasm) It's that kind of a day today ... (falls silent again).*

Silence again.

CLARK The last year though...

A pause.

MARK *(suddenly, smiling sweetly) Is there something you want to tell us?*

CLARK *(relieved) Yes! I want to entertain you somehow! Somehow to make you happy. But, to be honest, I don't know what to tell you. Nothing seems worth mentioning.*

MARK That happens. If you wish, I can help you?

CLARK Yeah, sure!

MARK We could, for example ... talk about your old man.

CLARK No good. He left the country before I was born. I was raised by women – my mom and my auntie...

MARK You see! An auntie! You'll entertain us and make us very happy if you tell us the size of your auntie's ass. *(to Tambourée) Isn't that so?!*

TAMBOURÉE Or even her head...

MARK No, her ass!

CLARK *(Surprised, giggles)* I don't know, really I don't. All her life she walked around in a tight-fitting, black dress. I never saw her bum.

MARK Then, for sure, you must have masturbated like crazy at night.

CLARK *(defending his auntie)* No! She had such tender hands! She used to rub my stomach when I was small...

MARK Tummy...

CLARK Tummy...

MARK To your wee willie and then tip-top up to the top. And back again, right?

CLARK No!...

MARK How old were you? ...When she used to rub you?

A pause.

CLARK Six...

MARK *(to Tambourée)* O! Thataboy! You couldn't tell from looking at him, could you!

Tambourée stops eating and looks at Clark.

CLARK *(totally flushed)* No, no, that's not how it was!..

MARK *(laughing, to Tambourée)* And in a "tight-fitting dress"! The first thing he remembered!

CLARK For God's sake, no!

MARK A small, wee willie!... *((to Tambourée)* What could be more tasty, don't you agree?!

TAMBOURÉE *(starts to eat again)* Idiot...

CLARK *(confused)* Why?...

MARK *(to Tambourée)* A big one – again no good! Too long! *(to Clark)* So! Why deny it! ... Well, did I guess? ... You climbed up on your auntie? *(catching sight of Clark's embarrassed glance in the direction of Tambourée)* You should be proud of it! At the age of six!

CLARK *(after a meaningful pause)* Yeah...

MARK O-ho-ho!!! Do I have a sense of smell! For people spinning tales. I see right through you! All of you blushing and going pale. *(all of a sudden, seriously)* Listen, how is it at six? Gets hard, but it's too short, right?...

CLARK I don't remember...

MARK Idiot! If you only had called me!

CLARK I didn't know you then.

MARK Didn't know me!... I'm talking in principle now! How can you forget?! I, for one, would never forget, for example ... well, for example ... let's say ... well, let's say ... for example...

TAMBOURÉE Is your bladder not full?

MARK Get lost!

TAMBOURÉE You yourself said to remind you...

MARK *(touching himself at the base of his stomach)* No, it's still bearable...

TAMBOURÉE *(to Clark)* And you?

MARK *(mimicking)* You...

CLARK *(seemingly very surprised and honoured, to Tambourée)* Thanks, already much better...

MARK What?! You dribbled! At the table...

CLARK No! I still don't feel anything! I don't have anything! ... *(to Tambourée)* Once again, really thanks.

TAMBOURÉE You're welcome. *(starts eating again)*

MARK You don't scare me, auntie's pet ...*(laughing good-naturedly, to Tambourée)* You say – everyone's the same, grey, no heroes...

Clark, totally confused and embarrassed, laughs. Mark's mood has markedly improved. The eating continues.

- CLARK *(after a while, to Tambourée)* But, please tell me, how can you tell that a bladder is full?
- MARK How is it that you haven't drowned yet in your own piss?!
- CLARK *(to Mark)* I imagine, that there's some new, special method. *(to Tambourée)* You really seem so concerned about this.
- MARK *(lightly, mimicking)* Could you... Baroness ... unbutton my trousers and open your lovely mouth? ... *(laughs)*.
- Tambourée doesn't even blink, however, Clark chokes and starts to cough.
- MARK *(slapping Clark on the back)* Well, fine, fine, don't take it to heart! Whatever each of us is capable of ...*(Clark still is choking.)* take more care when you eat!...
- CLARK *(finally having recovered his breath, is slightly insulted)* Surely there are some things in this world that one need not know! *(to Tambourée)* I, for one, have never had any problems with my bladder.
- TAMBOURÉE *(not looking up)* Everyone's bladder is different.
- CLARK Right! I totally agree. I can hold it for two hours. For sure I can sit through one act of a play.
- MARK For sure you don't need to then.
- CLARK Yes, you do. You sure do! *(to Tambourée)* But, let's say, that the minute I want to, I can go and piss.
- MARK Then that isn't real wanting! In fact, if you really need to, then it's already too late. And you dribble.
- CLARK That's never happened to me.
- MARK Don't tempt the gods!
- CLARK *(to Tambourée)* Do you agree?
- MARK There's one sure way to tell if the need is upon you. Can you do this – gurgle–gurgle–gurgle ... Like water running from a tap. Gurgle–gurgle–gurgle...
- CLARK Gurgle–gurgle–gurgle–gurgle...

MARK And if your bladder responds to that – you wait for the need! To be honest about it, then you already have to run.

CLARK Gurgle-gurgle-gurgle...

MARK Try it deeper in the throat – gurgle-gurgle-gurgle...

CLARK Gurgle-gurgle-gurgle-gurgle...

MARK *(all of a sudden)* Stop it! Enough!... *(tries to get up from the table).*

CLARK *(being a diligent student)* Maybe like this – gurgle-gurgle-gurgle!

MARK Shut up!!! *(finally gets up and leaves).*

Clark, taken aback, falls silent. A pause. Tambourée, however, is not even minimally surprised.

CLARK *(to Tambourée)* Needed to. Had to, yeah?! *(laughs)* Nearly was too late! *(laughs even with more relish, but Tambourée keeps silent, and Clark also falls silent).*

Tambourée gets up, takes a cloth and crawls under the table.

CLARK *(glancing under the table)* He was a bit too late, wasn't he? ... *(but very close to him, the enticing behind of Tambourée, just barely covered by her short skirt, is swaying. Clark is unable to ignore it and starts to sway along in the same rhythm)* A bit too late, wasn't he?! *(tries to smile, but Tambourée ignores him. There's a pause. Apologising.)* I really didn't mean to. It was totally unintentional...

Buttoning up his trousers, Mark returns.

MARK *(cheerfully, to Clark)* So, who was right?! *(seeing Tambourée's protruding behind sway in front of him, he freezes. To Clark.)* I can't just walk by this.

Mark quickly slides his hand under Tambourée's skirt. She doesn't scream or try to get out from under the table. Tambourée simply emits a long moan and freezes. Mark's hand blissfully continues to busy itself under Tambourée's skirt. Clark in confusion and embarrassment has almost turned to stone, but it appears, however, that some routinely enacted ritual is taking place here.

MARK *(with feeling, to Clark)* Guess, how many fingers I have already slipped in...

CLARK *(encouraged by Tambourée's lack of resistance and silence, shyly)*
Three, maybe...

MARK *(again with feeling)* See, what it means to have done it from six
years of age! That a boy...

CLARK I didn't quite...

MARK Shhh! ... And how deep am I now? Almost to my knuckles?...

Tambourée suddenly pulls herself up, nearly tripping Mark.

TAMBOURÉE That really is cynical!!!

MARK *(surprised)* I clipped my nails yesterday!

Tambourée smoothes down her skirt and seats herself. A pause.

TAMBOURÉE *(making excuses for her reaction)* We do have a guest here after
all.

CLARK Excuse me...

MARK A guest is a person too!

CLARK I didn't want to... I'll immediately...*(Gets up to go)*.

TAMBOURÉE *(pleading, to Clark)* Sit...

MARK Sit!!! Do you also think that this was rude?!

CLARK Yes ... no...

MARK Didn't you even feel the smallest tremor inside?!

CLARK Yes, yes, I was moved....

MARK *(to Tambourée)* The man felt good! You're not being hospitable!

TAMBOURÉE *(to Clark)* Sit!

CLARK Everything's absolutely alright! I'm fine! I was fine!

MARK *(to Tambourée)* Well, see! Now I even have to apologise for you.

CLARK No need!

MARK Of course there is!

CLARK No, why...

MARK Of course I must! I have to apologise! If you wish, we could also continue!

TAMBOURÉE (*pleading, to Mark*) I apologise...

MARK A forced apology from you is not needed by anyone. It's like fool's gold - meaningless!

CLARK (*to Tambourée*) Thanks! Thanks a lot! Everything has been and will be fine ... (*breaks off mid-sentence*).

MARK (*referring to Tambourée*) That wasn't from the heart.

CLARK (*to Tambourée*) I apologise – I don't understand anything any more. Thanks...this morning... tomorrow at lunch...yesterday evening...

MARK (*makes Clark sit down and pats him*) Don't take it to heart! I myself feel embarrassed...I'll make you a sandwich! Do you want one? Well, just tell me! I'll make one for you?!

CLARK (*after a moment*) Thanks, I'll do it myself.

MARK With ham? Maybe you a double-decker? A bit of steak in the middle, some salad, some Camembert and just to top it off, a slice of beef tongue! What do you say? Didn't that just make your mouth water! Admit it! It did water...

CLARK (*giving in*) With cheese, maybe...

MARK That's better! Say it once more!

CLARK With cheese...

MARK It's a joy to hear it! And good that you came by today! Well, a bit more boldly!

CLARK With cheese.

- MARK Well, see what you can do! Cut a slice of bread. If you wish, I'll make the sandwich for you!
- Clark cuts a slice.
- MARK *(inspects it)* Well this is out of this world! You really have the knack! So smooth it seems cut by a machine! *(to Tambourée)* Look, isn't that the work of a master?! ... I don't want to ruin it by buttering it. But a promise is a promise... My ancestors have always been hospitable...they've even put their wives under their guests.
- CLARK Really?...
- MARK *(firmly)* That was very long ago!
- CLARK No, no. I'm simply wondering.
- MARK Now it's totally different.
- CLARK Yeah, civilisation.
- MARK Isn't that the truth! *(devilishly)* Now women often do anything that pops into their head. I only lie there and listen. Without a right to vote, so to speak. *(in a loud whisper)* But to tell the truth, I even like it better being under...
- CLARK *(in the same tone as Mark)* Lazy bones...
- Tambourée giggles. This recognition momentarily inspires Clark.*
- CLARK Lazy bones. You must move! Move!...
- As if not having heard, Mark, with mock seriousness, starts to eat again. Also Tambourée doesn't laugh along with Mark, however, she has for the moment stopped eating. A pause.*
- CLARK *(softly)* Doctor's don't recommend being under...that's why I...
- MARK *(suddenly)* Early in the morning it was excessively cold. That wasn't forecast. And it's not so late in autumn yet. But directly afterwards it warmed up. Almost as if by a wave of a magician's wand, the dew evaporated. Not even the slightest breath of wind...
- TAMBOURÉE *(just as suddenly and intensely)* Even though the evening news forecast a heavy south-north wind of eight hundred metres per

second and totally mild and calm nights. The temperature was supposed to range between six and thirty-six...

MARK Stop! Stop it!

Silence.

CLARK (*very cautiously, to Tambourée*) Really, it could never be the south-north wind. You must have misheard...(*the silence continues*) Although that isn't very important... Maybe the south-west?...

However no one answers him even for politeness sake. Silence. Suddenly Clark shivers and gets up from the table.

CLARK (*to Mark*) Your gurgle-gurgle-gurgle really helped me...Gurgle-gurgle-gurgle and you get results, really! Excuse me, I won't be a moment...(*exits*).

For the total time that Clark is absent, Mark and Tambourée eat in silence. When Clark returns, Mark becomes livelier.

MARK (*in a loud voice*) You're a real sprinter! Did the toilet remain as it was, undamaged?! At such speed, there must be amazing pressure, isn't there?! (*laughs*) We were just discussing that nothing better than gurgle-gurgle-gurgle has been invented yet.

CLARK (*to Tambourée*) You're right!

MARK (*all of a sudden, to Tambourée*) You! YOU! YOU, baroness, are totally right! You have to wash your arse prior to eating!...

Mark breaks into thunderous laughter. Also Clark tries to smile. But Tambourée doesn't even look up.

MARK However, when drying, the towel shouldn't be shoved in too deep! Baroness! So you don't start coughing!...

Mark leans closer and closer to Tambourée; he seemingly is shaken by convulsions which are difficult to characterise as laughter. Clark's smile slowly disappears.

MARK Watch you don't gag! But you shouldn't waste things, baroness! You'll have to eat all of it again anyway!...

Mark's screaming becomes more and more intolerable, however Tambourée remains totally calm. Clark suddenly jumps to his feet and starts to comically wave his arms – it appears that he wishes to protect Tambourée.

MARK It won't be only your shit that you'll be gorging yourself with! You're going to swallow everything that I put in front of you! It'll dribble out of the corners of your mouth!... *(very suddenly, he falls silent, and then in a quieter voice)* ... It's starting to thunder...*(departs in a flash)*

Clark freezes to the spot, his hands raised foolishly. Silence.

CLARK I have to help you...

Silence. Tambourée starts to eat again.

CLARK No. No, excuse me! I understand that my nose is too long. *(tries to laugh. Silence)* You're right – guests are burdensome... that is, I wanted to say, their presence ... saying it simply, I offer to consider that nothing has happened. And after all, nothing has happened. No, better yet – I've just arrived! Hello, hello ... I'll sit down, if you'll allow me, of course, I'll sit down...

Tambourée continues eating. A pause.

CLARK *(sits down)* Hello, hello. Today from early morning on the sun has been shining.

Tambourée for a moment stares at Clark and then turns back to eating. A pause.

CLARK *(tries to laugh)* That's how all visits start, don't they! Once this ritual was forgotten the next day a revolution started in Guinea! ...

But the joke falls flat – and Tambourée remains silent. Also Clark has to continue eating. There's a long silence.

CLARK When I was in primary school my mom used to take me to figure skating. Today I regret that I abandoned it. *(a pause)* Of the new inventions the most original is the delta-plan. So totally quiet, it seems as if it's happening in a dream. I truly can't stand motors and other smelly things. Wrestling – for example! The so-called classic wrestling. With sweaty inner thighs, genitals, excuse me, right in each other's faces ... *(he shivers in revulsion. A pause.)* ... Ice, however ... a sparkling secret ... a temple, it seemed to me. I had already learned... I already was able to ... the ice was like a mirror ... I already totally without fear could ... what is that figure called! ... well, like this *(he jumps to his feet, and demonstrates – arms stretched out wing-like, chest forward, his right leg stretched out behind)*. The foot needs to be pointed, the foot ... *(he tries to demonstrate this, and almost falls over)* There were about twenty of us, and all of us, were like this, in a row...

Tambourée still does not say a word. It's difficult to discern if she even is aware of Clark's attempts. A silence.

CLARK Yes, it really was long ago, and also I'm not much of a talker... (*he sits down and then, after a moment*) What did he say about thunder?...

TAMBOURÉE Diarrhoea.

The sudden unexpected comment by *Tambourée* startles Clark.

CLARK You're totally unpredictable! Excuse me, I don't really...

TAMBOURÉE (*in the same matter-of-fact tone*) Diarrhoea. The runs.

CLARK But why "thunder"?...

Mark enters quickly. He immediately throws himself at Tambourée and starts to kiss her legs, her arms, neck and face, until unbelievably he ends up sitting in Tambourée's lap.

MARK (*to Tambourée*) Now isn't that crazy!. What are we going to do? Maybe we shouldn't have dieted today? Of course we shouldn't have. The same thing happened in April. (*sniffs her fingers*) Well, totally like it was in April! (*to Clark*) Half a year passes and the same thing repeats itself to a T!

CLARK Excellent memory...

MARK (*once more sniffs her fingers*). You're right. I have no memory for figures, but I also don't need to.

CLARK Yes, nature puts in every cradle that which...

MARK (*to Tambourée*) Well, what are we going to do? I don't want the runs like we had them before! I'm afraid! (*to Clark*) My guts nearly flushed down the toilet. It's a good thing that my anus didn't fall off! (*to Tambourée*) Well, tell me! (*again fiercely kisses Tambourée's face, all of a sudden*) Listen, it's thundering again. Hear it! ...

Everybody listens in total silence. A pause.

TAMBOURÉE I'll go and look for some medicine.

MARK No! (*tearfully*) I can't take anything into my mouth! I can't even think of it! ... (*proudly*) Hear, hear, how its grumbling!...

Silence.

CLARK But ...excuse me, I don't hear anything...

MARK Come closer. (*Clark listens*) Soon, soon, it'll happen! ... O! Once again! Did you hear?!

CLARK No...

Mark, who is sitting in Tambourée's lap, grabs Clark by the neck and pulls his head down to his stomach.

MARK Well, do you hear now?! Don't touch me! Keep your hands to yourself! (*Clark, bent very awkwardly, lifts his arms up.*) O! Well, did it happen?

CLARK What? ...

MARK Did it?!

CLARK (*impatiently*) Yeah, yeah, it did...

MARK (*relieved, to Tambourée*) Finally...

Silence.

MARK O! That certainly was thunderous, wasn't it!

CLARK Quiet down!...

MARK What?

CLARK Quiet down, I can't hear!

MARK (*laughs*) Thataboy!

Clark quickly, reproachfully straightens up.

MARK Forgive me!...Well, come back here! (*gently bends Clark's head*) Everything will be fine!...(pats Clark's hair).

Silence. All of a sudden Mark starts to twitch in Tambourée's lap.

- MARK Get off! Off!!! (*Clark jumps back as if burnt. To Clark.*) Didn't you hear?! The king of thunder!!! (*Finally he gets off Tambourée's lap*) Make way! Out of the way!...(*exits*).
- Silence. Tambourée again begins to nibble at the food.
- CLARK (*impishly*) Thump-thump, thump-thump-thump, thump-thump ... (*Tambourée raises her eyes. Clark, pressing his hand against his heart, in a louder voice*) K-thump-thump. K- thump-thump-thump, thump-thump!...
- Tambourée doesn't understand what Clark is doing.
- CLARK (*sits down, in a loud and with atypical bravado*) I will be so bold as to assume that you are interested in me. I am a good observer.
- Tambourée looks surprised, but keeps silent.
- CLARK That comment about the bladder for instance! ... Well, how you asked me ... Well, do you remember? ... Well, first him, then me... Well, have I not also had the need ... Well, you cared...
- Tambourée's surprise increases.
- CLARK Don't deny it! ...Did you not ask me? ...*How is your bladder!*
- TAMBOURÉE Just normal politeness...
- CLARK (*laugh self assuredly*) Thump-thump, thump-thump-thump! ...
- TAMBOURÉE Simple etiquette...
- CLARK Listen! Thump-thump, thump-thump-thump, thump-thump...(*Suddenly quietly, seriously*) That's your heart. Thump-thump, thump-thump-thump-thump! ... And this is mine. Listen – thump-thump and thump-thump...(A pause.) It was so unexpected, I could never even have dreamt of it. It's fate itself.
- A pause.
- TAMBOURÉE Is this because you pressed your ear against my tit?...
- CLARK (*laughs*) I didn't hear any sort of thunder anyway!
- TAMBOURÉE Did you even try?
- CLARK When I first put my ear near – there was silence. Then suddenly I heard: k-thump-thump, k-thump ...

TAMBOURÉE So I'm not the only one who can't hear: (*laughs somewhat crudely, but just as suddenly falls silent*).

CLARK (*increasingly intense*) I thought at the beginning that it was his heart. But there, in that spot, was silence. Afterwards, I thought it was mine! ... K-thump. K-thump. It really is fate, k-thump-thump-thump, k-thump, k-thump...

Mark enters. Glumly, he begins to eat, munching loudly. A long pause.

CLARK (*finally, to Mark*) That really isn't smart...

MARK (*not interrupting his eating*) Sing. Sing some more. (*Clark totally bewildered*) So what were you doing here? Waving your arms in the air...

Clark attempts to enlist Tambourée's support, but she is again eating, appearing totally indifferent.

CLARK I ...I remember a joke. A man comes home, knocks "Thump-thump-thump" at the door...

MARK (*in the same tone*) I know it. The wife can't answer, her mouth is busy.

CLARK No, no! ...The wife says ...

MARK I know!

Clark laughs, but the others don't laugh with him. Silence.

CLARK (*to Mark*) But you really shouldn't eat!

MARK (*very abruptly and aggressively*) You can imagine what will happen, when I'll be empty there?! Can you?

CLARK Forgive me!...

Silence.

MARK And, above all, how come you're sitting there so calmly? You don't even care! A person can lose their guts but you ... Why are you just sitting there?! (*to Tambourée*) Well, what are you staring at?! Glaring, goggling!!!

TAMBOURÉE (*all of a sudden, very loudly*) Do I have to stuff my finger up your arse?!

Clark burst out laughing. A pause.

MARK *(quietly)* So...

CLARK I'm sorry, but...

Mark gets up from the table and, his back hunched, slowly departs.

MARK It's really the pits ... Don't follow me! *(exits)*.

Clark and Tambourée remain sitting where they were. Silence.

CLARK That wasn't nice ...It just slipped out ...

Tambourée bursts out laughing, and Clark also starts laughing.

CLARK That wasn't nice...

A pause.

TAMBOURÉE *(all of a sudden)* Is yours erect?

CLARK Yes, I ...*(stops short)*

TAMBOURÉE I'm asking – do you have an erection.

CLARK *(flabbergasted and terribly embarrassed)* I ...my ... suddenly ...my breathing ...Yes. *(a pause, and then, all of a sudden)* You really shouldn't think! I really don't, I wouldn't ...On a physiological level every one is capable of this, but that's not the most important thing. Not at all. K-thump. K-thump-thump... Don't be frightened! That would be absolutely brutish of me! I really don't think like that!...

Tambourée is silent.

CLARK I swear to God! *(jumps to his feet)* You can check it out! ...

TAMBOURÉE Won't you be afraid?

In his embarrassment and confusion Clark forces out some incoherent sounds, but he still remains heroically standing.

TAMBOURÉE *(softly, impishly)* Hard as flint? ...

CLARK *(grabs his trousers)* Already? ...*(Totally destroyed, sits down.)*.

Tambourée laughs loud and long.

CLARK *(having composed himself)* But I don't have this diarrhoea...

Tambourée laughs again.

CLARK I swear to God! I've maybe had the runs twice in my life...

Mark enters, and sits down beside Tambourée, takes her hand and closes his eyes. A pause.

MARK *(tearfully)* All of this is shit, shit, shit...

TAMBOURÉE *(in a soothing voice)* Yes, yes, yes...

MARK A bunch of raped eunuchs...

TAMBOURÉE Yes, yes, yes...

MARK O my dear old cunt...

TAMBOURÉE Sure. Yes, yes, yes...

Mark suddenly jumps up and runs off.

CLARK *(laughing about Mark)* A meteor! A rocket! Tippy tip toe, small little steps. Legs pressed together, so he doesn't lose it! As if in a theatre! ... *(Tambourée doesn't say a word. A pause.)* When I was a child, I used to pretend – I was the only one who had this role ... *(A pause.)* I was supplied lovers *(laughs in embarrassment)* A good life, don't you think? ...

However Tambourée, glancing after Mark, still keeps silent. A pause.

CLARK *(apologising)* I didn't think ... I understand. At such a moment ... It's hard for him. Very... I have felt it myself. Very tough. I remember when I had for the first time...

TAMBOURÉE *(suddenly interrupts)* If you had, let's say, a dog's small pup... how would you call it? ...

CLARK *(after a moment)* Me?...Doggie...Bobbie, maybe...

TAMBOURÉE No, in little...loving words ...

CLARK *(confused, guessing)* Puppykin...little button...

TAMBOURÉE *(laughs)* Yes, yes, go on...

CLARK *(encouraged)* Sweetling ...fuzzy wuz, dumpling.

TAMBOURÉE Go on! More...

CLARK More...velvet nose...honey pup...o-o-oh, you little rascal!

TAMBOURÉE More...

CLARK *(gets to his feet and murmurs to the non-existent pup)* Now, now little imp ... o-o-oh, what's this ...o-o-oh ... look, look what a softy....

Tambourée is no longer laughing. She's becoming more and more glum, not even looking at what Clark is doing. After a while Clark also notices. Silence. Clark sits down.

TAMBOURÉE *(softly)* It was good ...*(A pause.)* Do you understand ...I myself don't...

CLARK I didn't do it right...

TAMBOURÉE No, please understand ... there are the Russians and then there are the English...

A pause.

CLARK *(hopefully)* The English...

TAMBOURÉE No, a Russian is a Russian, a Russian is accustomed to... a Russian is not an Englishman, do you understand? ... *(Clark still doesn't understand.)* And an Englishman is an Englishman. An Englishman is accustomed to ...an Englishman is not a Russian. Now do you understand!?!...

CLARK *(not understanding)* Yes...*(A pause.)* Someone once told me that everyone and everything has a language. Flies too. Plants talk to each other...

TAMBOURÉE *(despairing)* No! Please understand, an Englishman cannot become a Russian overnight. *(A pause.)* Or vice versa ...I myself no longer understand...

CLARK I understand...

A pause. Three times they both start to say something to each other, but they start talking at the same time and also stop short at the same time. Silence.

- CLARK *(finally)* I'll try to understand.
- TAMBOURÉE Can you say "cunt"?
- CLARK I can...
- TAMBOURÉE Say it!
- CLARK *(after a while)* Why?
- TAMBOURÉE You'll hate me tomorrow.
- CLARK I!? Never! I ...little button...honey pup...
- TAMBOURÉE *(interrupts)* Let's say, you're coming home from work, and I have prepared a hot dinner and I'm waiting for you. You see me, let's say... And you say – "O you, my dear old cunt". O you, my dear old cunt!". Can you say that?
- Clark is too surprised to answer. Silence.
- TAMBOURÉE Now do you see...do you understand?...
- CLARK *(smiling blissfully)* Of course, yes, of course! ... Such smut, such a revolting word ...Never! ...You were testing me, is that it?! Have I passed the test?! ... Tell me! *(falls on one knee in front of Tambourée. She laughs helplessly)* I don't want to wait – marry me! *(A pause.)* Let's ignore the circumstances, these conditions...I'll be able to, I'll certainly...*(Silence. Clark looks nervously in the direction where Mark has gone. Impishly.)* Silence means agreement...
- TAMBOURÉE *(after a moment, indifferently, directing her comment somewhere past Clark)* I said to you – an Englishman is an Englishman...
- CLARK But I asked ... you...me...
- TAMBOURÉE *(all of a sudden, very loudly)* Well then, tell me once and for all, as it should be said – "O you, my dear old cunt!"! You can't, can you! With your pale hand you can only paint sunsets and starve! You really can't!
- CLARK What are you on about...how can you...I asked you...
- TAMBOURÉE We, you, it'll just be shit...and dribbling excuses! ...

CLARK *(puffs up his chest, and stretches to his full height)* Why?! I can! I'll do it right now!...

TAMBOURÉE Well!

CLARK I can! I've nothing...Please – “O you, my...”...

Tambourée starts to laugh loudly, but then she suddenly falls silent and starts to eat desperately. She's obviously feeling sorry for herself. Clark is down on his knees.

CLARK You have to believe ...O you, my... *(Tambourée listens.)* But I don't think that is really the indicator. People also throw themselves under army tanks...

Tambourée has resumed her irrational eating.

CLARK ...o, you my...my... *(Tambourée freezes)* ...my... There are so many beautiful things in this world. We should get up and go, and...

Tambourée again starts shoving food in her mouth.

CLARK *(perks up)* O you, my dear old cunt!...

Tambourée freezes. Clark himself is surprised about what he's said.

CLARK Cunt...cunt...cunt...

Tambourée laughs, but after a while her head drops to the table and she starts to howl, almost like a dog. Without tears.

CLARK *(coming to his senses, after a moment)* Everything, everything's all right... *(Tambourée doesn't stop howling)* Don't, don't ...I'll start to cry too,. I'll cry ...cry...

Tambourée falls silent, but she doesn't lift her head. Clark runs off stage, to where Mark has exited, and then quickly returns.

CLARK *(urgently)* It would be good if you told him yourself. Everything just as it is. He'll be coming shortly. He's already flushing...*(he tries to lift Tambourée's head, but it keeps falling back. Clark tries to lift it again, slapping her cheeks.)* That will be the proper thing to do, absolutely correct, you do understand? ... It will be, precisely what you want, and he has no trump cards! You have to tell him! I'll be right here! ...*(He has to hold up Tambourée's limp head. A pause.)* Believe me, I know, how to smell the flowers, know the early dawn mist ... and figure skating ... Darling ... *(Mark's footsteps are heard)* Get ready! He's coming!!! *(Like a*

circus performer, he lets Tambourée's head go. It sways, but doesn't fall. Clark hurries to his place. A pause.) I'm so happy, really happy, that you have decided to start a new life.

Totally exhausted, without his trousers, Mark enters. Clark starts to eat.

MARK *(after a while, he recites slowly)*

You heroically sweated
to conquer your enemy.
You, who are our martyr,
Ta-ra, ta-ra, ram-pa-pa ...victory... the last line doesn't work...

CLARK *(loudly, hiding his nervousness)* Now victory is in hand!

A pause. Tambourée continues to silently stare into the distance.

MARK No good. It should rhyme with "martyr" ... and why "hand"?...

CLARK Martyr...tarter...barter....larter...

MARK There's no such word.

CLARK I invented it. Now it exists.

You, our martyrs, as nemesis
Have the largest penises!...

(laughs, self-satisfied)

MARK *(laughs lazily)* Not bad...*(to Tambourée)* Precisely like it was in April...

A pause.

TAMBOURÉE *(all of a sudden)* Yes, they're predicting a very harsh winter this year. Apparently it will be a very late autumn, but then, literally in one day the leaves will turn yellow, and on the day after, they'll fall off. On the third day it will already drop to minus sixteen. In the space of three hours a whole month's worth of snow will fall. They recommend that everyone be ready to insulate their windows...

CLARK *(suddenly and loudly, interrupts)* I've noticed before that you very rudely try to ignore a topic if it's something you don't like or if it's disadvantageous to you! You just don't want to hear! When a

woman talks ... *(he is forced to fall silent because Mark is smiling directly in his face.)*

- MARK Has someone eaten with my spoon, drank from my little cup and slept in my little bed?...
- CLARK What little bed! Who slept! You should be ashamed of yourself!...
- MARK *(to Tambourée)* Is your head spinning?... It's not a joke, to do it rabbit style: One-two-three and done. Are you still breathing?
- CLARK What rabbits?...
- MARK *(still to Tambourée)* Ah yes, I had totally forgotten! All the time he called YOU baroness, grabbed at the front of his trousers and offered to open your mouth... Your vocal chords now destroyed.
- CLARK *(to Tambourée)* That's so blatant, so extreme! It can no longer be ignored!
- MARK *(aping)* Oh-oh-oh!...
- CLARK Ah-ah-ah!!!
- MARK A-a-a...
- CLARK *(totally screeching)* A_A_A!!!
- A pause.
- MARK *(complacently, to Tambourée)* He's off his rocker! You can't conceal madness. Do you need more proof?
- Tambourée doesn't say a word and gazes into the distance.
- CLARK Ludicrous...proof...illness...
- MARK *(to Tambourée)* You have ten seconds, to give him up. We'll consider that nothing has happened. *(to both)* We'll have a dance in the New Year ... a polka.
- CLARK A polka! A twist!...Different scale, different values! For example, autumn mist. Skates...Ten seconds...It's enough to make a cat laugh!

Tambourée still doesn't say a word.

MARK Fine, we'll help you. *(to Clark)* Count to three!

CLARK Not on your life!

Mark *(harshly)* Let my balls fall off, if I don't take off myself after the "three"! *(to Tambourée)* It's your last chance!

CLARK One-two-three, one-two-three, one-two-three...

MARK Count also two and a half!

CLARK *(slowly)* One...two...

Mark starts to clear his throat loudly, but Tambourée doesn't even blink.

CLARK ...two and a half...

MARK *(to Tambourée)* I'm listening!!!

CLARK Three!!! *(runs around the table in celebration).*

MARK Continue counting! And with halves.

CLARK *(pretending to be horrified)* Your balls have fallen off! *(laughs)*

MARK *(to Tambourée)* Three and a half!

CLARK Your balls have fallen off! Your balls have fallen off!

MARK *(to Tambourée)* On top of everything else he is hallucinating! Do you also see some balls here? *(inspects the floor, looks under the table).*

CLARK *(In a piercing, shrill voice, pretending to be Mark)* I myself tore off my little balls ...

MARK *(pulling at his underpants)* Maybe I should show you?!

CLARK *(in the same tone of voice as before)* Oh-oh-oh...

MARK You won't be afraid?!

CLARK *(the same tone of voice)* Get ready, get set...

An ominous moment of silence. Mark grabs for the top of his underpants.

TAMBOURÉE *(the same as before)* I have decided to start a new life...Skating the fragrance of flowers...

The men freeze. Silence.

CLARK *(very solemnly)* And now without jokes...this is not funny...we have to stop joking...

Mark suddenly hurries to Tambourée, and forcefully pulls her by the arm.

MARK *(to Tambourée)* It's a nightmare! A nightmare!...

Clark grabs Tambourée's other arm.

CLARK *(to Mark)* A woman! A woman! ...

The men without consideration pull Tambourée in all directions, and she, as a result, is pushed into the most unimaginable poses. One moment Tambourée's legs are under the table, the next moment they flash in the spot where a little while ago helplessly her head had swayed on a limp neck.

MARK A nightmare! A nightmare!...

CLARK A woman! ...

Finally Mark and Clark tire themselves out. Tambourée's body is lying on the table in the midst of all the food. The men sit down, breathing heavily.

CLARK A nightmare, a nightmare...

MARK A woman, a woman...

CLARK Phew! Like a parrot...*(laughs)*.

MARK Arrhythmia! Feel this... *(presses Clark's hand to the left side of his chest)*.

CLARK There's a grating sound in my left lung just of late. See ...*(listens to his own gasping)*.

MARK We have to ease off! Let's take a deep breath! ...

Both inhale deeply at the same time. As they exhale, they burst out laughing. Soon both are breathing normally.

MARK *(cheerfully)* Now, what?!...

CLARK *(the same as Mark)* Now what?!

MARK It wouldn't hurt to go to the beach like we did last Sunday.

CLARK I left the ball at home.

MARK That's too bad.

Tambourée suddenly moves and lifts her head.

TAMBOURÉE What's going on here.

Silence.

MARK *(suddenly)* Aha-a-a-a-a!!!...

CLARK *(to Tambourée)* I'll defend you! Stay strong!

MARK So it's gone as far as that!...

Tambourée seats herself on the table, staring at the two men sitting beside her.

TAMBOURÉE A nightmare...

MARK I understand! He has stunned you and, taking advantage of your unconscious state, he's abused your body. *(he starts parting and searching through Tambourée's hair)* Does your head hurt?

CLARK *(caustically)* Three times with her forehead against the doorjamb!

MARK *(feels Tambourée's forehead)* How refined! Even an expert couldn't tell!

CLARK It's interesting, isn't it, how one can talk about a new life, while unconscious?! Or about skates?...

MARK *(to Tambourée)* He has poisoned you! *(opens Tambourée's mouth)* Your palate is burned! Strangled?! *(examines Tambourée's neck, tears open her blouse)* Has he forced you?! Threatened you!!!...

Tambourée tries to evade Mark's hands.

MARK *(his breath catching)* I got it. I got it! *(to Clark)* You wanted to do away with me! You put poison in the food!

CLARK There's a great need for it, that's for sure!

MARK *(to Clark)* Only you didn't take into account the state of my body, my health! You only inflamed my large intestine. *(to Tambourée)* Do you understand?!

CLARK Have the shits stopped, that you're not running any more?

MARK *(to Tambourée)* You see! He wants to get rid of me! I won't leave you alone!

Mark quickly shoves his head under Tambourée's skirt, but she very quickly frees herself of Mark, gets up and buttons her blouse. Mark stumbles into a corner of the room. A pause.

TAMBOURÉE *(softly)* That's revolting...

CLARK *(victorious, to Mark)* Poisoner...

Not even looking in the direction of Clark, Tambourée sits down and starts to meticulously make herself a drink, tasting it now and then.

MARK *(uncertainly, from the corner of the room)* My diarrhoea, by the way, was stopped by shock ... I really took it to heart, and it stopped... Not all poets, perhaps, brag that they're poets...

CLARK The martyr with the big penis...

A pause. Both the men stare at Tambourée, who still doesn't say a word. Mark comes up to the table, and also sits down. After a while, in order to feel more comfortable, he starts to eat.

CLARK *(scornfully)* Taste good? ... *(cheerfully, to Tambourée)* As the ancient philosophers have said- "*It hic pendulum de nostris kapik sirun*" ... I'll make some sandwiches *(not waiting for Tambourée's response, he sets to work)*.

MARK *(all of a sudden)* Sandwiches, sandwiches, and more sandwiches ... food! Which has made me grow big. From a small platinum haired little guy with a butterfly net, in short pants... *(impetuously)* O, what the hell, I'm not afraid of being sentimental! Trite, if you say so! ... In short pants in a sun drenched field...

CLARK *(still making the sandwiches, to Tambourée)* Original! Catching butterflies in sun drenched shorts! *(laughs)*

Tambourée doesn't pay attention to either of the men.

MARK *(ignoring Clark)* The grown-ups always used to marvel about me. I never did torture the little flying beings I caught, I didn't stick them with sharp pins...

CLARK *(laughs)* What then?

MARK ... I let them go free...

CLARK *(to Tambourée)* We only need to find the thermos. And we'll be off to a picnic! And romance. A night in a tent!

A pause. Each sunk in their own thoughts.

MARK I always wanted to call the fluttering flight of the butterfly escaping from my palm a dance...

Mark, humming a melody, starts to turn in a lonely, not particularly graceful waltz. His twirling circles bring him closer and closer to Tambourée. Clark suddenly jumps to his feet and, trying to get in front of Mark, starts to dance a fast classic rumba. Mark is disconcerted only for a moment, and then he responds with a fiery twist. They both compete to be within Tambourée's angle of vision. In order to outdo Mark, Clark begins a slow, faultless tango. Mark is totally out of breath, and losing. He sits down. Clark can't have enough of his sweet victory dance. Finally the tango is finished. Clark freezes in an effective pose. A pause.

CLARK I don't hear applause!

A pause. Tambourée applauds lazily.

CLARK Thanks!

Tambourée doesn't swallow the mouthful of the cocktail she has just drunk. Instead she sprays a fine mist of the drink into Mark's face.

MARK Yes, that's good.

Inspired by Tambourée's action, Clark begins to dance a fantastic but short samba. Again he freezes in the last pose. Suddenly Mark starts to applaud loudly.

MARK *(to Tambourée, about Clark)* You couldn't tell now, could you! Almost the king of butterflies! How bright and powerful! Who would have thought it, that this man at the age of six had screwed his nanny? ...Bravo-o-o! Encore, bravo-o-o...

Mark continues applauding. A pause.

CLARK *(calmly, to Tambourée)* There's something special in Latin American pieces ...well, something – they're certainly not polkas.

- MARK *(still applauding)* Bravo-o-o! A great actor- a great role! Bravo-o-o-o, bravissimo-o-o! ...
- CLARK *(to Tambourée)* I'm going to go and find a thermos!
- MARK Bravo! At the age of six...
- CLARK *(all of a sudden)* What revolting lies!!!
- MARK *(to Tambourée)* Maniac! We can only speculate, what he intends to do with you! Brute! His own auntie! Just think of it – such a small, snot-nosed kid and a “black tight-fitting dress” ...
- CLARK *(to Mark)* Leave my auntie in peace!
- MARK The same as YOU did!
- CLARK Nothing of the sort ever happened!
- MARK *(in a loud whisper)* Maybe you can't get a hard on and never have been able to have a hard on?! *(laughing unpleasantly)*.
- Clark opens his mouth, but can't find an appropriate response.
- CLARK *(finally, to Tambourée)* ... words fail me!
- MARK We can use our eyes! Take off your trousers! *(to Tambourée)* Have you even checked him out? Maybe he really has lied. About the raped old lady...
- CLARK Auntie!
- MARK Auntie, excuse me! Well, what are you waiting for? Take them off! Probably you have something to brag about! ...
- CLARK *(totally shocked and indignant, guarding his pant front)* That after all is my personal business, if I can get a hard on or not...
- MARK ... which relative I screw, which not...
- CLARK Nothing of the sort has ever happened! Never, ever! ...
- A pause.
- MARK *(calmly, to Tambourée)* Did we mishear? Really?! We both! ...

Silence.

- MARK *(to Clark)* I recommend that in situations like this you should start to talk about the weather. For example – spring is just around the corner. It’s arrived with cold air currents ...*(he can’t control himself and starts to giggle)*.
- CLARK *(abruptly)* Believe me, it never happened. The first time I ...my auntie was already dead ...I was twenty-six years old...
- MARK Oh! Six – twenty-six ...
- CLARK I was totally inexperienced ...*(he stops short and totally deflates)*
- MARK Fine, fine, fine...*(to Tambourée)* Let’s not touch the fragile places? ...
- CLARK Thanks.
- MARK But we didn’t mishear, did we? Without doubt...
- CLARK *(after a while, to Tambourée)* I said it like that ... I had ...I thought ...
- MARK At that moment it had to be said, is that it?
- CLARK *(relieved)* Yes! In that situation ...I thought...
- MARK ... that we wanted to hear it.
- CLARK Absolutely right. It just happened. *(smiles weakly at Tambourée)*.
- MARK The person closest to you...
- CLARK It just happened...
- MARK *(to Tambourée)* And what other fairy tales also just “happened” for him?
- CLARK *(to Tambourée)* I haven’t lied to you! Ever! About anything!
- MARK *(laughs)* YOU baroness...
- CLARK *(throws himself on his knees in front of Tambourée)* I swear! I really love figure skating! ...
- MARK And the butterfly net!

CLARK I'm ready ... I can ...I swear to God!

MARK We believe you! We believe you! (*laughs even more heartily*).

A strange smile also plays on Tambourée's lips. At her feet, Clark turns into a totally pitiful heap of misery.

MARK (*mimicking the voice of the Auntie*) What a dear, perverse little boy, who still doesn't have even the suspicion of hair on his little pouch, ha-ha-ha... (*laughs for a while, and then calms down*).

Silence. Clark doesn't move. Tambourée throws a bit of her drink on poor Clark.

MARK Well, what do you say, let's make him drink piss? Or eat shit?

CLARK (*all of a sudden jumps to his feet. To Tambourée, about Mark*) He is a pervert, he is!!! Look! His trousers are off already! I know he wanted to rape us both! He wanted to do it to us here, here, here (*hysterically jabs at all the conceivable places through which he thinks this act of rape can occur*)!!! Me ...here, here, here and maybe also here!!! He'll pull off my trousers and here, here and here! Maybe he won't even pull them off, and here, here, here...(fatigued. A pause.)

MARK Not a bad thought.

CLARK Yeah! You're all ready, your trousers already off!

Mark unhurriedly goes offstage and returns holding his trousers.

MARK (*unhurriedly pulling on his trousers*) I was ill. We all know that.

A pause.

CLARK You can always find excuses! Especially for taking off your trousers.

MARK (*slowly and enunciating very clearly*) I was ill.

CLARK You're lying!

A pause.

MARK (*looking closely at Clark*) Unless of course you put something to cause diarrhoea in my food.

- CLARK No!
- MARK *(very calmly)* You're lying.
- Silence.
- CLARK No. I have decided that the mistakes in this life can be corrected. A mistake in life can be corrected. For once in my life...
- MARK *(loudly)* And even if I was lying! Yes, I lied! I lied that I didn't lie! And that I lied, I didn't lie, and I lied that I lied! *(Silence. Clark endures Mark's aggression. Suddenly Mark, with a screeching howl, falls at the feet of Tambourée.)* What a pig I am! A boar, a hog, an orangoutang. A gonococcus! A spirochete! ... But you already know that. You already understand *(he kisses Tambourée's hands)*. Nature itself makes me be what I am, and I can't be otherwise. *(howls again)* You're the only one who knows and understands, only your soul is capable of understanding and pitying me – the scoundrel of scoundrels...*(he sobs, unable to speak)*.
- A pause.
- CLARK *(trying not to show his confusion and embarrassment)* You have to look your mistake, your mistakes, straight in the eye...in the eye...
- MARK *(kissing Tambourée's hands)* I know the moment has finally arrived. I'm losing you.
- Tambourée is silent.
- CLARK I am convinced that mistakes, a mistake, can be corrected.
- MARK *(to Tambourée)* This moment had to come. I was expecting it.
- CLARK *(increasingly more pathetic)* It's possible to live honestly. I know that now.
- MARK *(to Tambourée)* He's young and strong, honest and enlightened.
- CLARK Just an hour ago I was green and stupid, but right now nothing there's noting negative about me. One could say that finally I'm sprouting a moustache.
- MARK *(to Tambourée)* My darling, does he really not know anything yet?

CLARK Of course, now I have experienced the destruction of love, fire and sin!

MARK *(once again kissing Tambourée's hands)* I knew that you are the very best of all. You'd never say it! Never! Let me do it in your place. And to congratulate you.

CLARK I have fought, ached for this!

MARK Oh, for God's sake! ... *(jumps to his feet, and forcefully makes Clark sit close to Tambourée, while he, positions himself behind them. A pause.)* I'm convinced that the road paved by my fingers, tongue and sometimes also my nose shall be continued in style! I wish you happiness!

A pause. Mark starts to work his leather belt out from his pant loops and, in view of Clark and Tambourée, makes a noose.

TAMBOURÉE I'll make some sandwiches.

CLARK *(to Tambourée)* I don't understand something...about the fingers, tongue and nose...

MARK *(to Tambourée)* Tell him! Right now it doesn't matter...

CLARK Yes, we must be quite clear.

MARK *(to Tambourée)* Besides I think it won't disgrace you. The main thing is the soul after all ... Answer him! *(the leather noose made from his belt is ready, sliding nicely)* Where to find a tree? Or simply a branch...

Mark walks around the room looking for a branch. Tambourée keeps silent.

CLARK *(bravely, to Mark)* The person who poses the riddle should give the answer!

Mark places the leather noose around his neck, and positions it so it won't rub. Tambourée still doesn't say a word.

MARK *(ominous calm)* Then listen! ...I ... can't raise it ... For a long time already. It's hard to remember the year... Therefore in my arsenal there are only fingers, my tongue and also the nose ...I'm going to look for a branch...*(doesn't move)*.

Silence.

CLARK *(to Tambourée)* What...

MARK *(interrupts Clark)* Of course, I've also put my mind and ingenuity to use...

CLARK I...

MARK ...and it really hasn't gone so badly for us...

CLARK But...

MARK Of course, a real working ...penis, as you put it, is a real working penis. It has its natural advantages, so to speak.

CLARK Forgive me, I didn't know...A moment ago I suspected you without cause.

MARK Not to worry...

CLARK Still! When you were ill, with your trousers off...

Suddenly Mark's unbelted trousers fall. A pause.

MARK What's the sense of it all now...

Mark again starts looking for a branch in the room, the slipped trousers restricting the length of his stride. Clark jumps to his feet, runs up to Mark and pulls his trousers up. And afterward Clark follows Mark around, holding up his trousers.

TAMBOURÉE Fine, I'm making some sandwiches. You find the thermos.

MARK *(laughs theatrically)* Look! Sandwiches!... Sandwiches! ...*(to Clark)* Let go of me! I'll find the branch myself! You go and look for the thermos! ...Sandwiches!...

Clark, however, doesn't let go of Mark's trousers and very conscientiously follows Mark's mad scramble around the room.

CLARK *(to Tambourée)* Really, maybe sandwiches now...

MARK What are you on about! Asking for more butter!

CLARK *(to Tambourée)* I don't know yet where to get a tent...let's postpone the picnic to Wednesday, all right...

Mark suddenly becomes serious, even sincere.

MARK I have no tears. That's fate, and, in the face of it, I don't want to be afraid.

CLARK We did postpone it to Wednesday...

MARK From this moment on my future existence becomes senseless. I no longer am needed by anyone (*smiles bitterly*). The law of nature.

CLARK But everything hasn't been tried yet!

MARK (*abruptly*) My last wish!

A pause.

CLARK If it only can be granted...

MARK It won't be necessary to wallow in shit. Trousers will stay on too.

CLARK I'm listening. (*remembering Tambourée, who has turned her back to the men*) We're listening.

MARK My wish is that you would understand that a real penis is not comparable to fingers, a tongue or even a nose. My wish is that you would understand that between us, in reality, there has been nothing, that she is virtually a virgin. I wish for you both to be happy...

A pause. Tambourée suddenly with a loud bang throws her glass to the floor. Clark lets go of Mark's trousers, they slip to half-mast.

CLARK (*runs up to Tambourée*) Really! I don't know what to do! If there has been nothing ... (*seeing Mark's fallen trousers, he hurries to them*).

Tambourée takes a plate from the table and again with full force throws it to shatter on the floor. Clark runs to her.

CLARK Of course, I understand. On principle I have no right to give you to anyone. I have won and by this I have become, baroness, your slave and master! I understand.

Mark pulls the leather belt and again goes in search of a branch. Clark returns to Mark's trousers.

CLARK We undeniably have to be humane!

Tambourée throws the next plate to the floor. Clark again runs to Tambourée.

CLARK Of course, we have to help him, I totally agree, baroness...

Clark runs to Mark. A plate shatters and Clark runs to Tambourée.

CLARK I have a plan friends! If there has been nothing between you two, I think, I have thought it out, let it be nothing in the future too! (*A pause.*) Exactly in the same way – let there be nothing. I won't worry about it, if everything will be as it should be between us!...And the man will feel needed... As they say, the rabbit will have eaten and the goat will be alive!

Silence.

CLARK (*bursts out in nervous laughter*) I truly thank you! The wolf is alive and the rabbit lives, of course! ...Phew! The goat is for the rabbit and the wolf has eaten ...no, excuse me! The goat is in the rabbit for the wolf...alive...well, something like this, you do understand...

As soon as Clark's embarrassed giggling ceases, Mark starts to holler very loud and with exaggerated bravado.

CLARK I got tongue tied, didn't I...

MARK So you would allow me to play the overture and then you would come in with your real man's ...

CLARK Of course. Of course! Those are simply details...(*to Tambourée*) One good deed outweighs ten evil ones in this world...

Mark pulls up his trousers and from now on holds them up himself.

MARK (*to Tambourée*) We would like to be clear on this, wouldn't we?
(*to Clark*) Won't you want to, let's say, play a while with her nipples?

CLARK Maybe I could actually start with that, and then you would come in again at the end...

MARK So, you will start and finish, and I would be in the middle with my fingers, tongue and nose ...doing nothing, so to speak.

CLARK (*somewhat annoyed*) No, you're doing something, only we consider that you are doing nothing!

MARK That's exactly what I wanted to say. I'm building steam.

CLARK You could say so.

- MARK But how will you keep a hard on during this time – be on the ready, so to speak.
- CLARK Well...we will solve it somehow...(*to Tambourée*) I wouldn't like to now, here...
- MARK Nonsense! (*to Tambourée*) That, judging from everything that's happened, should be done by you. Open your sweet little mouth, show the uncle how...
- CLARK It could be, of course, also like that, but I really wouldn't want to...
- MARK (*to Tambourée*) Therefore, your knight wishes I should ready you for his heroic, hard-as-steel dick.
- CLARK Thoughts have turned into words. It doesn't sound quite right any more.
- MARK What're you saying?! (*laughs rudely*).
- CLARK (*offended*) After all, I can withdraw my offer.
- MARK Which one precisely?
- CLARK That I could let you go first.
- MARK (*to Tambourée*) See, he still has to decide how he is going to screw you! Be patient!
- CLARK I don't want to, I repeat, discuss it right now.
- MARK (*to Tambourée*) It could very well be that he gets another six eunuchs to assist him.
- CLARK (*to Tambourée*) Ingratitude is the reward in this world.
- MARK Who knows! Maybe a whole show will come of it!
- CLARK (*surprisingly rude*) Shut up!
- MARK He'll erect a tent in a city park and sell tickets at the entrance.
- CLARK Brute!!! Brute!!!

Their noses almost touching, they are standing quite a distance from Tambourée.

MARK (to *Tambourée*) But your ass will always be coppered with sawdust.

CLARK Out!!! Leave!!!

MARK (to *Tambourée*) But what a squadron of tongues and noses!...

CLARK Sssssshhhhhuuuuuuutttuuupppppppp!!!!!!!

Suddenly *Tambourée* starts to howl. Just like a dog. But without tears. The men jump aside and freeze.

MARK,
CLARK (After a moment, in unison) There she goes again!...

From now on, in order to talk to each other, they take advantage of the brief moments of silence between *Tambourée*'s howls.

CLARK The last time I threatened that I would start to cry. That stopped it.

MARK So that's where the "figure skating" and the "flower mist" came from...

CLARK I'm talking about this howling.

MARK Of course! Tears, depression.

A pause.

CLARK It would only be right for me to help her. (A pause.) Maybe I should threaten her with tears again?

MARK Tears mean depression.

Mark matter of factly forces *Tambourée*'s mouth shut with his hand, and while doing this, his trousers fall down to half-mast. *Tambourée* continues to howl into Mark's palm, but the noise has lessened and it has become easier to conduct a conversation.

CLARK But I have to have a heart. I can't be indifferent.

MARK Right you are.

CLARK Now it's much more difficult for me than it is for you.

MARK I swear to God, I'd like to have her go on howling for a year yet.

CLARK Only you can talk like that. Everyone knows you're irresponsible.

MARK Just to have a week of rest.

CLARK I must act for sure.

A pause.

CLARK Could it be that it'll stop of its own accord?

MARK She could keep whining for days. It seems to have collected.

A pause.

CLARK Well then, I'll cry! Let it be depression! What can I do about it...
At least she'll stop howling.

MARK Again we'll have this "taste of honey" or else "I'm going to start a
new life"...

CLARK They're not empty words. We talked for a long time. I convinced
her! She understood!

MARK Depression.

CLARK You would want to explain it that way!

MARK A very real depression.

CLARK Stop irritating me!

A pause. Tambourée still is whimpering in Mark's palm.

CLARK Well then, I'll cry!

MARK I should be the one crying.

CLARK You don't know how.

MARK There's another way. We have to induce apression.

CLARK Fantastic! Magnificent!

A pause.

MARK Well!

CLARK Well?!

MARK Is it clear?

CLARK Let's do it!

MARK What's apression?

CLARK What's apression?

MARK It's certainly not depression.

CLARK Well, let's get to work then!

MARK But what is apression?

CLARK Really, what is this apression?

MARK *(after a meaningful pause)* It's when a person is happy, when he's having fun.

CLARK Why?

MARK A special reason is not even needed.

CLARK That's impossible!

A pause.

MARK *(gazing into Tambourée's face distorted by distress)* A fat cat sat on a mat...

CLARK Being happy without a reason is not possible.

MARK *(ponderously, as if lecturing)* Allow me to point out that the conclusion is erroneous. Being the originator of this term - apression, I would like to prove and to clarify my assertion with data extrapolated from experimental and empirical tests performed on a repeated basis ... I hope that you are convinced now.

CLARK *(in the same tone as Mark)* Of course, I wouldn't want to refute this. I am persuaded by the results gleaned from multiple experiments. As they say – "Ic hic pendulum..." and so on. And I ...*(impatiently)* Let's go ahead!

MARK *(calmly)* We are discussing my conclusions from extrapolations of results of empirical tests on a pressia! You objected to the assertion that happiness does not exist without reason...

CLARK Someone could enter!

MARK I repeat, you objected, that without reason...

CLARK Yes, yes, yes, thanks... Therefore, I conclude. I wish to add, that Pavlov's saliva indicators have in a similar fashion recommended themselves as very good. A human being is human, it is the most orthodox of dogmas. As they say – "Ic hic pendulum..."

Tambourée has fallen silent. A pause.

CLARK *(relieved)* Look at that!...

Mark takes his hand away from Tambourée's mouth but she begins to howl again. Mark puts his hand back.

MARK Yes, I have nothing more to say.

CLARK Please, let's begin!

MARK I have to point out that my method consists of ... it is therefore...you understand...so to speak, from...total...

A pause. Mark suddenly takes his hand off Tambourée's mouth and throws himself at Clark. Tambourée again is howling loudly. Mark wraps his arms around Clark's head in an odd fashion. There's a short scuffle until Clark no longer resists, then Mark again heads toward Tambourée and again presses her mouth shut.

CLARK *(loudly gasping for air)* I should really be offended now, for God's sake!...

MARK Forgive me. It's easier to demonstrate it after all.

CLARK I hadn't given you any reason...

MARK We have to act just as lightning fast! We have to stuff up all her holes! So that oxygen doesn't get into her system! She'll suffer for just a moment, but immediately after full-blown a pressia will set in – happiness and joy. Thanks to this.

CLARK My left lung...

- MARK And not even a sign of depression!
- CLARK But I don't have a pressia...
- MARK But did I stuff up all, absolutely all your holes?! Think! (*laughs loudly*).
- A pause.
- CLARK But I really was short of air.
- MARK If you didn't lack air, it wouldn't have worked!
- CLARK But you could also... you could also have much too little...
- MARK Yes, it could be. Only refrigerators have guarantees. (*A pause.*) We really want her to get to a state of a pressia, don't we! Besides that, the last time it happened she was very grateful to me. Apparently it was easier to live after. And to work.
- CLARK (*after a while*) If you weren't the one saying it, it would be very hard to believe.
- MARK (*laughs proudly*) Did you see how I squeezed your head?
- CLARK Your thumb is still in my left ear.
- MARK So, I'll take the head, you, the ass.
- CLARK (*hurriedly*) Of course. Certainly! I'll try.
- Mark releases his palm from Tambourée's mouth and she resumes her loud howling. Mark and Clark get ready to set to work. Mark takes off the leather belt from his neck, pulls up his trousers and puts his belt on.
- MARK Show me your nails! (*Clark extends his fingers*) It should be the right hand! The three middle fingers.
- Both warm up as if they were athletes before the start of a race.
- MARK (*after a moment*) Maybe I should take the ass? ...
- CLARK Why you! Rely on me!
- MARK You won't know how to use your index finger.
- CLARK (*whines*) There are more holes in the head. After all I'm inexperienced.

MARK *(after a moment)* But don't do any sharp moves,

CLARK Like this?

Clark several times demonstrates the intended action, biting into a slice of bread that he has grabbed from the table.

MARK This way you'll get an ulcer in your duodenum *(seats himself at the table)*.

CLARK Afterwards...

MARK *(abruptly)* This is not a theatre! At the most crucial moment you'll fall flat like a cockroach.

CLARK I'll hang in.

MARK *(suddenly)* Don't make me say it twice!

Momentarily Clark obeys. Both men partake of a short, peaceful meal. Tambourée is howling with her last resources.

CLARK,
MARK

(in unison) Thanks. *(They get up from the table and both move to be near the seated Tambourée, Clark is on his knees)*.

MARK Everything will happen only on command from me! ... Attention...Stand at attention! *(Clark obeys.)* Get ready, get set...breathe only through your nose! Get ready, get set, oh-o -ho ...if she bites my hand, aim for the jaw!

CLARK Yours?

MARK Hers! ... Get ready, get set...

CLARK You'll hit her in the jaw if she bites me...

MARK You'll hit, if she bites me!

CLARK Ah! Right you are!

MARK Get ready, get set, o-o-oh stuff 'em!!! ...

The scuffle doesn't last long. All three, tangled up, fall to the ground. A long silence.

EPILOGUE

Or

FOR THOSE, WHO NEED A NEAT AND TIDY ENDING

Mark and Clark, sweating and exhausted, are crawling away from Tambourée. After a while Tambourée opens her eyes. The oriental smile doesn't quite suit her European face. However, it is wide and dazzling. Tambourée gets up and, not hesitating even for a moment, sets to caring for and caressing the tired, fallen men.

Tambourée dances with one, then the other. They all are humming a melody, which with each moment become louder and louder.

Soon the dances turn into real circus numbers, in which Tambourée plays the leading role. They become more and more daring and breathtaking - deserving of great applause.

“Gurgle-gurgle-gurgle...” – at one point Mark murmurs quietly and after a moment of confusion, he and Clark disappear offstage.

Tambourée remains alone. The applause ceases. Silence.

With great fervour and care, Tambourée tidies up the disorganised room. A wide smile plays on her face.

Tambourée notices us, the audience sitting in front of her. In dismay, very slowly, her smile peels disappears. Silence.

Tambourée spits in our faces, laughing rudely and insolently. She turns her back to us, pulls up her short skirt and, not looking back, leaves.

Mark and Clark enter.

“Everything was fine.” – Mark assures Clark.

“But. Still...” Clark says, rubbing his chest.

With their right hands they are buttoning up their trousers.

“You only missed the toilet by a bit .” – Mark assures Clark.

“But. Still...” Clark keeps rubbing his chest, “Something happened before that...”

“Right on my shoes.” – Marks tone is still reassuring.

“My memory’s totally gone! – Clark laughs in embarrassment and confusion.

“Nothing to worry about.” – Mark says.

“I agree. It’s really nothing...” Clark slaps his itching chest.

“Shit!” – Mark

“Shit!” – Clark echoes, with conviction.

Etc.

* * *

1989.

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