

THE BASE

by Lauris Gundars



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Character breakdown

Brothers:

Janis – male, 35, owner of the milk processing factory, wealthy man on the first generation. In the business he is trying to hide his fear behind the mask of aggression, in the social life he is sunny, a little bit clumsy, overly chatty, still he invariably feels superior. He wants to see the world as he has imagined it, not as it actually is, because he knows the reality too well. He tends to put his name in the history.

Jacob (JC) – male, 33, tries to create an impression of a rich person even at impossible cost, thus hiding his descent, which he is ashamed of. He cannot live without new people around who would admire him, usually they are women. He does not want to look into the future for more than three days; he is scared to get old.

Arnolds (Arnie) – male, 37, tall, simple and usually smiling. While spending many years in the psychiatric clinic in his early life, he learnt to know people very well and realized that one must not talk about his own dreams, in order not to lose them. He speaks only when addressed, and when it happens, he amazes people with sincerity. He loves if being loved. He annoys people who think he sees through them.

Rita (Ritakins) – female, 37, wife of Janis; purposefully and successfully has tried to break through the poverty by using quite average natural qualities. She has begun to think about her abstruse desires, but after long years of pretending it becomes hard to understand where she is herself. In order to understand it, she smokes pot. She thinks she has never lost in her life.

After many years of absence, two brothers come from the city to a remote country village to visit the third brother, Arnold, who still lives in the parents' house. The formal reason for the visit is Arnold's birthday, even though the visitors have mixed up the date. Actually Jacob, the playboy, has come here to avoid his creditors whereas the rich brother, Janis, would like to get the loner Arnold's sperm to continue his bloodline. For that purpose, Janis has also brought along his wife Rita. The trip does not turn out according to plan and makes the "successful" brothers revise their approach to life, revisit their childhood and the then received revelations about life and its ideals. The brothers have been so keen on forgetting their origins that they cannot even remember who is the oldest. The idea of family and its heritage also undergoes a radical revision: neither of the

two has ever been able to admit that they do not wish to continue the family line whose *pater familias* used to chain his sons to a tree for weeks at a time to inculcate them with the "correct" views whereas the mother has tried to save her children, even to the point of hiding one of them in a psychiatric hospital. She was able to finally get rid of her husband at the price of losing her own life. Paradoxically, the family line is continuing: Arnold turns out to preside over a kind of a voluntary harem and is the father of five children. Once considered strange, he now attracts people with his magnetic personality and is still an idealist. Even though two of the brothers perish at the end of the play, the audience has witnessed an action-packed discussion about the important question whether we can live a life of our own choosing or is it easier to follow some set pattern.

The action of the play takes place in our time and spans one week. Location: a room in the family house. Genre: tragicomedy. Length: 120 minutes.

Scene 1

The parlor of a farmhouse. A summer evening.

A man-sized, bell-shaped object with horizontal slits near the top stands in the middle of the room. From the chaotic mess of things in the room it looks more like a workshop than a living space.

The sound of a car arriving in the yard is heard, followed by the honking of a horn.

Laughter, the sound of voices and banging of doors. The people who have arrived apparently are walking through some other rooms of the house, and a man's voice in the background is heard calling ARNOLD'S name.

Finally, the family room door opens – and JANIS, a 35-year old light haired man with a prominent pot belly enters. He's holding a white plastic bag, for which he cannot find a resting place until the end of the scene because the room is too littered and too dusty.

JANIS: *(calling)* Arnold! ... Hey, kid, are you here? ... Arnie, kid!...

Behind him one hears the sound of excessively loud laughter from a woman and a man. Finally a woman stumbles into the room – she is RITA, a 37-year old blonde, wearing spike heels and a short skirt. She's holding a somewhat /tired looking, largish flower bouquet, wrapped in cellophane.

RITA: What a pigsty!!! ... What an ungodly mess!!!...

She laughs again, and it becomes clear that Rita is substantially intoxicated. Also drunk is JACOB, a 33-year old man who follows her in, wearing modern tight-fitting clothes. He is taking pictures one after another of the premises as well as the arrivals.

JACOB: Have we got off at the right stop?...

Both he and Rita guffaw again, abnormally loudly. Janis doesn't pay attention to them but heads to the window, which is located at the front of the stage facing the audience.

JANIS: *(looking out of the window)* Nothing has changed...

JACOB: The kid has gambled away the house to someone.

JANIS: Only you would be capable of such a thought.

JACOB: But you, never.

JANIS: We simply relinquished our shares to our brother. For a token sum of money, you may remember. Arnold! Arnie!...

JACOB &

RITA: Kid!!!... Happy birthday!!! ...*(they sing)* Happy birthday, happy birthday to yo .. ou! ...

Both again are laughing and taking photos of each other.

JANIS: Nothing has gone to ruin: look, new hinges have been installed in the barn.
JACOB: *(about the bell-shaped object)* See here, the kid has joined a sect!
RITA: Ding-dong!!! ...Halleluja...aaa..ah!

They all examine the odd bell. Jacob can't stop photographing it.

JACOB: This isn't a church after all.
RITA: Let's build one! Arnie. I want a church!!!...
JANIS: Bells are poured in one piece, they're not soldered.
RITA: Arnie, let's wake people up! So they can see how they live! Ding-dong!!!...
JANIS: Bells have no holes...
RITA: That's for sure! Holes are only in asses ...
JANIS: Don't you want to lie down for a while?
JACOB: No, that's a suit of armor!
RITA: Wonderful!!!
JACOB: No, it's a watchtower... he'll place it on the roof, look through the slit and will sound a trumpet when enemies approach!
RITA: *(to Janis)* Hear that, we'll sound trumpets when you show up!!!
JANIS: Go lie down...
RITA: Please!!! Shall we have a few squeezes first or shall I shed my panties right now?

Rita lies down on the floor.

JANIS: Get up, please! It's horribly filthy here...
RITA: Lie down, get up, lie down, get up, lie down! ... Maybe I want something filthy, honey? ...

Suddenly Janis begins to rummage through some stuff and comes up with a rusty pail. Rita is sick to her stomach. Having for a while labored over the pail, she grabs it and hurries out of the room.

JACOB: We overdid it in the car a bit, eh? And then it's so hot...
JANIS: Maybe he's forgotten that it's his birthday?
JACOB: It's his B day for sure.
JANIS: You've been hoping a bit, no?
JACOB: Why?
JANIS: Now that you've remembered. It's always seemed to me that his 35th was still a long way off: he hasn't lived, after all...

JACOB: It somehow always seemed to me that he was already 50, when we were still in primary school. What a dreadful life: being old from day one.

JANIS: Take a picture of me here.

Janis positions himself by the window and strikes several poses.

JACOB: What for?

JANIS: Make sure that you see the path and the barn: the yard of our birthplace...

JACOB: And Rita too? (*about Rita in the yard*) Oh, how she let loose! I myself will soon have to run too, for God's sake...

JANIS: Don't include her in the shot.

JACOB: It's too dark already. Tomorrow morning.

JANIS: There won't be a sunset like this tomorrow. Look, how the apple trees are aflame. Do you remember?

JACOB: Let me sit down for a while, OK? ...

Jacob too obviously is not feeling well – he digs out a rickety chair from the muddle of things, sits down, slowly begins to slump and then falls asleep.

JANIS: (*gazing out of the window*) ...Father would walk to the barn followed by the cows... after them, mamma with pails, do you remember? And the apple trees were aflame and the cows – red. And you barefoot scurried towards them – You wouldn't even let me go outside, do you remember older brother! ... (*calls out to Rita from the window*) Breathe deeper! Breathe in, breathe out, breathe! ... (*to Jacob*) Each evening father shaded his eyes with his hand and looked up – at the stork, remember? ... We little ones didn't understand then how those sacred birds dirty everything: they're a real shit factory – of course, that nest had to be taken down. But all that old superstitious gossip by the old biddies that followed: "The house will no longer be blessed!" ... It's a blessing not to work but to gaze at the sky: when from a white airplane a grenade whistling hits the ground! ... Father worked hard. Look, at those apple trees! (*to Rita*) Breathe, breathe, breathe!!! ... (*to Jacob*) If one thinks about it, what would we be today? Say what you may, but he really had substance ... (*to Rita*) Don't make a scene! Don't make a scene!!! Come inside! ... (*to Jacob*) We come from here – whether you like it or not. We can forget about saying 'thank you', but that wouldn't be decent...

The door opens. Rita returns with the pail.

RITA: (*whispers*) Let's go home...

JANIS: We just arrived.

RITA: Some sleep...where can I get some shuteye? ...

JANIS: For now we'll lower the seats in the car. Right now?

RITA: No, later ... After I milk another cow!

JANIS: Father always said: “Vomit before you mow the field, don’t keep it inside!” When he dragged us out of bed at six in the morning. That’s how it was, wasn’t it? (*Notices that Jacob has fallen asleep. To both Jacob and Rita.*) Get a hold of yourselves. Come on! We’ve come for a visit. Let’s organize this mess, tidy up – so it’s nice for all of us. Our father’s home...

Jacob resists, refuses to wake up.

RITA: Let’s go home...

Janis takes out a two-liter Coca Cola bottle from his plastic bag.

JANIS: Rinse out your mouth! Just don’t spit it back in the bottle! And wipe off the mouth of the bottle.

RITA: Please, let’s leave...

JANIS: (*quietly*) I knew that it would be just like this.

RITA: I didn’t do it deliberately.

JANIS: I don’t give a damn: we’re here and we have to do it.

RITA: Janis, honey... I ...

JANIS: Let’s not start again! You don’t want it. And you know very well what you want. And I know it. So that’s that. You only have to smile – you promised. Nobody’s asking for more than that! (*in a louder voice to Jacob*) Brother, do you need some money?

Briefly Jacob attempts to wake up. Janis laughs.

JANIS: I need it too, who doesn’t need money? ... Get up, Rita wants to clean, tidy up here. We’ve got to sleep somewhere, don’t we?

JACOB: Has the kid shown up?

JANIS: We’ll find him, look for him, but the neighbors probably have already spread the news. (*glances out of the window*) But it’s really beautiful now – everything is red!

The door opens – ARNOLD, 37-year old man, appears. He’s a rather large man wearing work overalls and an undershirt. He’s obviously not smiling just because of his visitors – he’s a man who always smiles.

JANIS: Close your eyes! Eyes closed!!! ...

Arnold obeys. Janis takes him by the hand, and draws him further into the room – to a less cluttered spot. Gesturing and grimacing, he entreats Rita and Jacob to get a hold of themselves. He presses the flower bouquet into Rita’s hands.

JANIS: Three, two, one – a - and!...

All the visitors, as much as each is able, sing “Happy birthday!”

JANIS: You could have opened your eyes long ago! Happy birthday!

Arnold opens his eyes. Rita is smiling too broadly as she hands him the bouquet. Jacob hurriedly looks for his gift in Janis’ bag: a liter of vodka. On seeing it Rita immediately grabs the rusty pail and runs out of the room. Janis laughs. Then Janis pulls his gift out of the bag – a box wrapped in bright paper. But he doesn’t give it to Arnold immediately.

JANIS: The morning I turned 35 I asked myself – now you old devil, is there still something that you don’t have? I’ve got everything. More than everything – I can even share with others, don’t you agree? ... Of course, no one gave me anything special as a gift that day – all sorts of junk. But the next morning I woke up with an inexplicable feeling: that I was lacking something after all! But I didn’t know what. For a whole month I didn’t know. And then one day – I got it! I had it! I had had something, but no longer had it. And that was what was missing! And you are the ones I missed. ... No, of course, I won’t try to persuade you all to live together in this house, but we have lost something, I understood that then. And that’s our family. Our base. I understood it. There’s no more family, no base ... Yes, it’s also my fault: I also left here. And Jacob took off even before me. Only the baby of the family remained. The person who remained is the one to whom I can give today that which he doesn’t have ... Here’s what I took when I left this house – as a keepsake. Now I’ve brought it back.

Janis hands the box to Arnold – it turns out to be heavy: it drops on Jacob’s foot. Arnold doesn’t hurry to open it.

JANIS: (to Jacob) Open it for your brother!

With trembling hands Jacob attempts to unwrap the bright paper, finally tears it off. It turns out that inside the gift-wrapped box is a white brick.

Scene 2

The same farmhouse parlor. One day later. Midday.

The room has been somewhat tidied. Even now Rita is still tidying up. The bell-shaped object is still where it was: but it has been improved – several hooks and two projectors like Mickey Mouse ears have been added.

The table has been de-cluttered – on it is a plate of sandwiches, vodka, Coca Cola and glasses. Janis is sitting at the table wearing an unbuttoned shirt and briefs. There's a short moment of silence –Janis gazes out of the window into the distance.

JANIS: (suddenly) No, he's raving – raving non-stop! But why is he raving? Why does he suddenly so dreadfully want to be the eldest brother? Regardless, the farmhouse belongs legally to him ...

He pours himself a shot of vodka and drinks.

RITA: You're at it too early...

JANIS: Fine, we came on the wrong date, but we damn well only erred by a bit – why be insulted! And why the eldest brother? What nonsense! Father wouldn't in that case have prepared me to be the master of the house. Of course – JC split right away, but Arnie was here, just the same, and he had to know how to do father's work. The youngest ones must fend for themselves, but father provides for a foundation under the feet of the eldest and he gave me that – that's how it was, and thanks be to him for it...

RITA: Have you not taken something the wrong way – you were all on good terms yesterday, and Arnold is peculiar ...

JANIS: He's not so peculiar...

RITA: It's not possible to mix up who is the eldest.

JANIS: Of course not! Why all of a sudden does he have to add five years to his age?

RITA: And what about JC?

JANIS: He just sniggers – like always. That's tragic, how can he be a lawyer? He's starting to lose his marbles, have you not noticed?

RITA: He's got other marbles...

JANIS: He's bullshitting, bullshitting! And I just sit there and nod, the idiot!

RITA: He's peculiar, he is.

JANIS: Moron... (suddenly) No! Don't start that nonsense again! He's a regular guy! Yes, maybe from the loneliness here he's imagined something, but otherwise he's a man of iron – and even if he is now forty, that's great: good genes. And just don't! ... Maybe we've got something mixed up about the years ...

He pours another shot and drinks.

RITA: We'll have to leave tonight.
JANIS: Go out in the garden – he's probably hanging out somewhere, behind the barn...
RITA: Why do you need him now?
JANIS: We're brothers! Three brothers ... It's a good feeling, like in that fairy tale, isn't it? Maybe we should start a new tradition – to get together every couple of years? In our family home, on Arnie's birthday, well – the real one... And then maybe you'll want to meet him – we'll be even a closer family then, what do you say?
RITA: Stop! I'll leave right now, I swear!
JANIS: Leave. Get ready. It doesn't matter if you don't know how to smile. You can't help any more anyway. If we could only ensure that it happens the natural way...
RITA: Idiot!!!

Janis laughs. The door opens and Jacob enters – wearing only briefs.

JANIS: I couldn't find you – I rang and rang... You've turned the cell phone off again? How long this time?

Jacob reaches for a sandwich and Janis slaps him on the fingers.

JANIS: We'll eat all together – when our brother returns from work.
JACOB: Can you just imagine what kind of a guesthouse he has there?
RITA: What does he do there?
JACOB: Plays at being manager.
JANIS: There are some sort of boats there – he probably guards them.
JACOB: From where did you take that brick?
JANIS: By the entryway.
JACOB: None are missing there.
JANIS: Do you think I can remember off which corner of the house it had fallen?
JACOB: Ours are whiter, more smooth.
JANIS: Rain, the sun...
JACOB: The size is different...
JANIS: *(to Rita)* Tell him how many times I haven't let you throw that brick in the garbage.
JACOB: I can't go back to the city.
JANIS: How much?
JACOB: You won't believe it.
JANIS: You won't believe what it's added up to.
JACOB: It's surely not because I've never repaid anything!
JANIS: We won't talk about it now.
JACOB: What will we talk about now?
JANIS: That's why you decided to come here – to stay, under cover?

JACOB: No-one made you come. You refused, why change your mind? .. Did your sense of family kick in?
JANIS: You think I'm bullshitting? We no longer are brothers?
JACOB: I'd better shut up. I have shut up.
JANIS: Where is he? It's already five minutes past! ... (*about the bell-shaped object in the middle of the room*) It seemed to me that Arnie doesn't know how to do anything, but no matter, he's been soldiering on honorably...
RITA: What is that then?
JANIS: I already told you.
RITA: Don't treat me like a fool! Jacob?
JACOB: A submarine without an engine: the truth. Hang it by a rope behind a boat, let's say, while he himself sits inside. Look, he's already installed pieces of glass – to look through to the outside.
RITA: There's a hole at the bottom.
JANIS: The bottom stays open. Millions of years ago with these sorts of contraptions people dove down into the water: air does remain inside – one can breathe. Only your behind is in the water.
RITA: Don't bullshit!
JANIS: Sometime in our childhood he used to bug me – let's go diving, come on let's go diving ... In some fairy tale book it's written that in our lake a whole city has sunk...
RITA: Real pretty...
JANIS: Aha! It's the muddiest lake in Northern Europe! You can't even see your own hand in front of you.
RITA: But he knows that.
JACOB: Shall we explain it to him?
JANIS: (*to Jacob*) Why does he all of a sudden want to be the eldest brother? I don't get it.
JACOB: Maybe he is the eldest: I don't remember how old he was when I split.
JANIS: You were always older. He was the kid.
JACOB: For you I'm the older too ... Why make this fuss. What difference does it make?
RITA: How can you not know?
JANIS: And? Does it make any difference that you're the younger sister of Gita? Both smart ... I'm not making a fuss, I simply can't understand ... Where is he, it's already ten past! ...
JACOB: Do you need this house? No, I'll shut up ...
JANIS: Then shut up!

The door opens and Arnold enters – smiling as always. He's got a large pike.

JANIS: O-ho ho!!! ... A man with a catch! Take it woman!
RITA: How beautiful!...
JANIS: Go on, fry up the beast, grill it.
RITA: Yes, of course! It's fresh, isn't it? Is it alive? ...

Rita laughs and takes the pike away. Janis makes Arnold sit at the table between himself and Jacob, who again reaches for a sandwich, but again Janis doesn't let him take one.

JANIS: Have you been working today? We'll get some if our brother leaves leftovers! *(to Arnold)* The woman made these, eat! ...

Arnold eats, but seemingly just out of politeness.

JACOB: Where did she fly off to with that fish? The kitchen is here...

JANIS: *(laughs too loudly)* Oh, the fool! But let her run around a bit, looking for it! It doesn't matter because I would have sent her out to suntan. Given that there's such an opportunity to sit for a while, the three of us after so many years...

JACOB: *(to Arnold)* Spit it out right away, don't choke on it!

JANIS: *(to Jacob)* Why aren't you eating? I was only joking!

JACOB: *(to Arnold)* You know, he's fucking around like that because I owe him money. And dreadfully much. I'm his slave.

JANIS: Then dance! Sing!

Jacob sets himself to doing it, singing very off key.

JANIS: *(laughs)* Enough! I forgive all your debts!!!...

Everyone laughs, but each very differently. Also Arnold, who is being very observant of all that is happening, tries to understand what must be taken seriously and what not.

Janis pulls out from under the table three porno magazines with very explicit covers – one for each of the brothers. Jacob, who finally has thrown himself at the sandwiches, even chokes on seeing them.

JACOB: Were you remembering your childhood? Shall we take a sentimental journey together? ...

JANIS: Guess again.

JACOB: You're divorcing?

JANIS: I don't even have a reason to have an affair – incredible, but the fact is I'm a happy man.

JACOB: You're a pervert though – I suspected as much!

JANIS: Yes, I am! ... Well, one may call it that perhaps. Against the backdrop of the crazy life that surrounds me, normal I probably am not.

JACOB: If our old man were to see this on his dining room table, he would strangle mom, and then hang himself afterward! *(mimicking father's voice)* "How else wash away this sin?!" ...

JANIS: It wasn't so crazy with him ...

JACOB: No, but I still always think of him when I pee!

JANIS: Everyone has their own principles, each of us is different...

JACOB: You're not different! It's good that you don't have any children!
JANIS: Are you trying real hard to make me mad?
JACOB: (*whispers to Arnold*) Quiet! Dad's talking.
JANIS: He had his bad sides, but he also had good ones, and we're only here because of him, we must appreciate that. And there are things that he understood very profoundly...

But Jacob has begun to flip through the pages of the magazines, in a quiet voice commenting to Arnold. He also is showing the photos in his camera.

JACOB: Look, this way you can get in very deep ... I always wonder about this – for me it hurts like hell, but they just keep on fucking. They should print some exercise program as an intro. A brilliant idea – a porno exercise collection! I'll publish one! ... What do you like better – with large tits, right? Listen, you could tell us – how your porno life is here? Your brother here could maybe help.

JANIS: Maybe I can finish? I really have something to say.

JACOB: Fine, I'm sorry ...

JANIS: Really it'll be a continuation of my yesterday's toast... For the last half year I've been thinking about one and the same thing – I already said it: about us, our family. It has ended, it will end with our deaths not one of us has a real, veritable, also legally indisputable family heir. And we're not getting any younger... But that, of course, will not happen and won't happen, and it doesn't happen on command, that's clear. We have to grow up until then ...

JACOB: (*about the magazines*) Let's practice, let's grow!

JANIS: We're living in the kind of world where one comprehends the sense and context of a family only when such magazines are superfluous.

JACOB: You managed it.

JANIS: No. Otherwise I myself would have a house full of children. But I'm starting to be aware of it. And I wanted to share that...

JACOB: Fine, what do you want?

Janis takes out from under the table a portable icebox.

JANIS: I've arranged a place in a special refrigerated unit – where our semen will be stored until the moment when we can say with conviction: our family must continue! Maybe it will happen in the next generation, after three...

A moment of silence. Janis takes out three jars from the box and puts them in front of his brothers.

JACOB: Your current jar ran off with a fish somewhere: you must be getting a divorce after all....

JANIS: Can't you ever get with it? Only a loser sniggers at everything! You aren't one, are you! ... Let's each go wherever each of us would like and let's

meet up after two hours: the goods need to be in place tonight, the specialists are expecting them... Yes, we arrived on the wrong day, maybe even the wrong year, but that just proves again that it's about time. If the old folks were alive still, they would surely bless us.

JACOB: Symbolically, in our parental home...

JANIS: Yes, also that. *(to Arnold)* Do you understand?

JACOB: *(to Arnold about the jar, demonstrating)* This is your wife – crystal clear, transparent: the ideal vessel to hold the family seed. Open the lid and shove it on. Then look at some pictures of whores and sow the family seed...

JANIS: *(calmly)* Well, why the silence? Keep talking! ... *(to Arnold)* We'll decide later if we need his genes after all, although the exceptions prove the rule – there isn't a family without a cripple! ... *(to Jacob)* If you don't want to, no need – we'll manage without!

JACOB: I want to, very much! Hell, how I want to inoculate the family with a cripple. So it'll be stronger: you yourself said it. But it won't happen. There's a technical problem.

JANIS: The spermatozoa have dried up?

JACOB: No! For the life of me I don't know what to do, there's so much of it! But all of them mess up the brain! Because once a man in white, very white, got a hold of me, threw me on a gynecological chair and tied those polliwog tubes! But they keep coming – it's madness!

JANIS: What a great way to save on condoms!

JACOB: I'll give you that doctor's name to avoid him like the plague: if he gets a hold of you, that's the end of the family tree. *(to Janis)* Maybe you know him – the doctor's name is ...

The door opens swiftly and Rita runs in.

RITA: It swam away! That fish!...

JACOB: Were you standing behind the door?

RITA: I was carrying it across the yard when it lunged out of my hands and into the pond! And it's swimming away, into the depths!

JACOB: *(laughs)* Guys, let's jump in after it!!!

JANIS: Yeah!!! ... Think I won't catch it? How many times have I jumped in there? Let's go!

Janis leaves the room with Rita right behind him.

JACOB: It'll be a blast! ...

Without saying a word, Arnold also leaves.

JACOB: You forgot!

Takes a jar and leaves.

Scene 3

The same place. Evening. Sunset.

A cake box, paper plates, plastic forks and glasses on the table. Jacob is wearing Arnold's clothes. Arnold is wearing Jacob's, which are somewhat too small for him, thus he looks rather comical, not elegant, which the clothes actually are. Arnold is smiling on the opposite side of the table. Jacob at the moment is doing push ups on the floor and later does other exercises.

JACOB: *(counting)* ...11...12...13...14...15...Oh! I did it! During the week I'll get it up to 30, you'll see! ... Remember when I had to manage it 120 times when I poured the yeast in the new shithouse? 120 times without getting up. The old man himself couldn't do it. I nearly died... *(mimicking his father's voice)* Small shit – 20 times, strong shit – 40, normal shit – 50! ... 120 – those were hyper-shits! ...

He laughs. Then he picks up the camera and starts to photograph Arnold – but soon it's obvious that Jacob perceives his brother more like a thing: he directs his attention to various parts of Arnold's body, and doesn't notice his embarrassment.

JACOB: ... You haven't cut down the small apple tree I see – in memory of dad... I remember its every crevice, every chink– I was the one who was most often hung on it. You didn't earn that punishment ... Listen, can't I get some sort of lamp in my room – I couldn't find one anywhere. Did you see – I tidied up there... Just don't waste your breath. I don't intend to stay here forever. Stop that – I don't need the farm. I'll do some yoga here for a month or so, and that'll be enough. Now I'll start life anew: I get this way every three years. I don't know why it hasn't occurred to me to come here for a month. It has fallen nicely into place this time. And you in the meantime won't die from boredom: I'm a fun guy, you'll see. It's strange if you think about it a bit: we almost don't know each other, in our old age, that is. But you'll see – afterward you'll beg me to come and stay with you again... We'll arrange to get a TV from somewhere – it'll be fun. It'll be like the old times – no contact with the outside world – I already threw out my mobile. Yes, threw it away. Well, okay: you don't even know what that dependence on a mobile means, but it's madness. In general, old man, dependencies, especially dependencies, are the ones that mess up good people. Yes I'm in debt to Janis, but you don't know why. Addiction . Guess what kind. I'm a normal lawyer, I don't use drugs, I drink very little, don't gamble, almost never smoke... Well, what is it with me? Guess – three times... Women, women and, a third time, women! I

laugh about it: I'm a suicidal type. Well, with suicidal tendencies. Women depress my survival instincts! Don't laugh – it's a dreadful misfortune! I don't wish it on anyone! Now for at least a month I can't be permitted to leave the house – then these withdrawal symptoms will pass, and I'll be myself again. That's what yoga is. If I by chance want to take off somewhere, you grab me and don't let me go – no matter what excuses I give you: I know how to do that! If any woman wants to come in here, chase her away with a shitty club! They somehow sniff me out even from a kilometer away: I don't know how else to explain this madness. I want to live my own life, but they come at me in droves. Besides that, they all think that I've fallen in love, but that's not so: it's they who fall in love. I'm the addicted one, that's all. Yes, old man, – look at me, and be thankful to God that you aren't threatened by it all! But one can't also live a life without women. Let's organize something, only later when I'll be a bit cleaner... Listen you don't do any gardening. Maybe we'll organize something – we won't have to spend anything on what grows for free. We may even get our hands on some dough. But what's yours is yours, and ecology is ecology. What do you eat, if anything – there's no fridge... We'll organize that. You'll learn a lot from me, buddy. Just let these people leave and then we'll start a new era! (*about the cake*) This was in their trunk. Rita knows how to fry up fish, does she! They order everything delivered from the store, old man. Another dependency, I swear to God! That yogurt factory prints money, and what's the sense of it? They've built hut after hut by their castle – so that sometimes people don't have a real roof overhead! ... But, fine – have to think positive, only positive, right old chap. (*looks out of the window*) Ah, she's pulling her hero out of the car! ... Think of it: sleeping in father's home is beneath them. It's nothing to have to prop your legs up on the steering wheel. Aha, he nearly stood up! ... But what a sight: good that he jumped to his feet else his neck would have snapped. He's covered in leeches the size of stickleback fish. You should have heard the sound his balls made when he jumped on shore – like balls of ice banging together. ... Clean spring water: he's forgotten what that's like! I've seen a man drink a half-liter of vodka at one go, but almost a full liter, wow ... Well, he'll make it here, he won't, he'll make it here, won't... on all fours! ... (*waves out of the window, smiles*) Brothers are most often strangled and not poisoned ... No, Arnie, I'm talking about Shakespeare: there is such a thing as theatre – these things are dealt with much more simply. Natural selection – whoever crawls, off with his head!

The door is opened with force and Janis enters – excessively energetic and loud. Nevertheless he whispers.

JANIS: I sent Ritakins for some coffee – no need for her to listen to men's talk! At least until my polliwog battalion reaches her frightened ovum! ... (*to Arnold*) Did you have a sweet run-off? How many liters? ...

He takes the cooler out from under the table, takes out a jar – a frog is sitting in it. Jacob tries not to laugh at Janis' shock and astonishment. Arnold is quietly smiling, as always.

JANIS: (to Arnie about Jacob) Brother ... I understand that he's a very pleasant guy: a jokester, a million laughs a minute, lives life with gusto – I, of course, am not like that. And I don't want to be like that, but what I said about our family, I truly meant. Fine, maybe now it sounds rather odd to you, but believe me, God sees and knows all.

JACOB: Amen!

JANIS: (to Arnold) Let's do it, if only because we're full-blooded men...

JACOB: Where is your jar?

JANIS: (to Arnold) I was drunk after that icy dip in the pond...

JACOB: It shrunk, couldn't find it, and then it wouldn't stand up for anything! ...

JANIS: (to Arnold) ... and then defective genes can result. But I'll do it, I'll go back home and do it definitely early in the morning...

JACOB: Well, he can't get stiff on your whores! The man returns sadly with his empty jar. (to Arnold) Are you dreadfully sore?

JANIS: Don't screw around with his brain! (to Arnold) Take off all those rags – we'll buy new ones! Get a load of what you look like! ...

JACOB: Do you want to buy him? Then you must say so!

JANIS: How much money do you need?

JACOB: As much as you don't have. Let me tell now tell you a story. I once went to my see my doctor and ...

The door opens with force and a smiling and very energetic Rita holding a large thermos comes into the room. She notices the icebox and the jar with the frog in it.

RITA: And I was wondering where my box was? Oh, is someone trying to become a zoologist?

JACOB: Your dear hubby! The secret experimenter, the sadist! Did you not know?

JANIS: Arnie ... please check if there isn't too high ... a mercury level in the pond. This is a sample...

RITA: Lovely! ...

JACOB: Yes, this frog shines in the dark! ...

RITA: Hot coffee! ... (about the thermos) Chinese made, but it stays warm for two days: let no one say that they're all backward over there! ... Here's some powdered milk, sugar ... Let's drink and then leave – it's getting dark already...

JACOB: ... we didn't have enough money for the car headlights...

RITA: Janis gets phone calls constantly from his work – even on Sundays! ...

JANIS: We're staying.

RITA: But they do phone, you said so yourself...

JANIS: Once in a hundred years we visit, and we'll take off right away? Let's help Arnie— you yourself said: a woman's hand is needed here...

RITA: But...

JANIS: Your man has spoken: we're staying! ... *(to Jacob)* Do you at least know how to slice a cake?

JACOB: Don't give me a knife!

JANIS: *(laughs)* It would be a good title: "A Man Due to His Idiotic Character Stabs His Brother in Front of Another Brother"...

JACOB: And in their paternal home!

RITA: *(slices the cake, to Arnold)* Do you like waffle cakes? Have you ever eaten one?

JANIS: I was stupid crawling into that pond, that's for sure. *(about the bell-shaped object)* Should have done it with this: should have said so at once! Would have had a trial run at the same time!

JACOB: Your balls would still be in the water.

JANIS: *(to Arnold)* Don't you want something more modern – I can imagine that all sorts of oxygen tanks and warm diving suits are on the market, so that the pollywogs don't freeze. Let's drive to a store. When do you get a holiday from that boat office?

JACOB: Dear brother, not everything can be bought with money. With Arnold's permission, I can explain *(about the bell)*. This is an ecological business, you are one with nature: the same as a fish or a crayfish. You gaze at everything around you but you can't touch anything, because you have no hands. And you can't bring anything home. Approximately like that. Not far from the island there really is not only a castle but a whole sunken city.

JANIS: But there's nothing to be seen in our lake...

JACOB: Seemingly below a layer of sludge there's clear water – a sort of lake below a lake but you have to get through the shit first. *(to Arnold)* It seems to me he doesn't believe me.

JANIS: Why... if it's there, it's there...

JACOB: Only with a heavy contraption like this can you get through.

JANIS: Well, that's incredible ... but warm pants are needed nonetheless.

JACOB: A mystical water stream is seemingly there – like the hot springs of Iceland...

JANIS: *(to Arnold)* Did you really see it? ...

JACOB: Not clearly, no – once he poked his head into it: while he had enough air.

JANIS: That's a real find!

JACOB: Just say that you believe!

JANIS: Yes, why not.

JACOB: So you would already have started to print tickets for this event!

JANIS: Print them yourself – you're the one who needs the money! *(to Arnold)* See, how he believes you! But I can imagine it, why not... We can talk about it. *(to Rita)* Run out for some three liter ones. *(to Jacob)* Get ready, Ritakins will drop you off at the bus stop.

JACOB: I'm staying here! Did I not say? *(about the clothes)* You see, Arnie has hired me as a worker; he himself will now be the supervisor!

JANIS: *(to Arnold)* He wants to gamble away your farm! Get ready to go to an old folks home!

JACOB: Ritakins, hon, just look at us, well, have a look! Who of these brothers do you dislike right now? ... And who do you like the most? Don't evade the question! It's so simple really!

RITA: *(to Arnold)* Eat your cake!

JACOB: She has chosen!

They all laugh, but each differently.

Scene 4

The same place. Night.

Something can be discerned in the room thanks to the moonlight shining in through the window. On the table, side by side sit Rita and Jacob – they're smoking a joint between the two of them, drawing in smoke with visible delight. The two are whispering.

RITA: (about the joint) If someone had told me half a year ago that I couldn't live without this, I would laugh out loud!

JACOB: And now tell me the real deal – who is he? Do I know him?

RITA: Who is 'he'? I've told you all there is: Janis wants an heir to the throne and only his blood heir, but there's a problem, hence this circus...

JACOB: But he's not sterile – you were the one who paid for those analyses that showed he was, when it's you who had the IUD inserted. Who is he?

RITA: That's a joke! ...

JACOB: You know I'm the principal patient of that doctor: you could almost say that without my genital history he would long ago have gone bankrupt. We met there, remember?

RITA: There's such a thing as doctor confidentiality!

JACOB: Brothers are no strangers ...

A moment of silence.

RITA: Will you tell Janis?

JACOB: From that may we conclude you've found someone else, and that you don't want to live the rest of your life bare-assed. You have to divorce in such a way that Janis is the guilty party, so that you get at least half of those yogurts. Who is he?

RITA: How much do you want?

JACOB: But you have nothing. Janis has more.

RITA: Why are you always getting at each other's throats? You need the money! I nearly lost my nerve: (*she mimics Jacob*) I'll tell you, I'll tell you! ... Fine, you'd bury me, but he wouldn't give you any money nonetheless: no one gives anything for those sorts of revelations.

JACOB: The amount I need, he wouldn't give me anyway – so why shouldn't I give in for once to my deeply hidden desires?

RITA: How much do you need: after the divorce, of course.

JACOB: What are you going to do with the heir to the throne?

RITA: There won't be an heir to the throne.

JACOB: Janis always gets his way – something he learned at father's knee.

RITA: Just imagine what Arnold's genes are like! A retard's chromosomes...

JACOB: But they're family genes!... How one can screw up brains, ah?...

RITA: We didn't know that that you're sterile, but we had already written you off: Janis just needed one jar.

JACOB: You wouldn't refuse my chromosomes, would you?
RITA: Stop it!
JACOB: That's why you got so pissed when we were coming here. I didn't understand then ...
RITA: But what should I do?
JACOB: Keep your voice down!...

Rita listens to the sounds of the night and then staggers to the door and presses her ear against it. She comes back.

JACOB: Arnie's sleeping like a log – you can't even hear a fart it's so quiet.
RITA: Was he in that psycho place for a long time?
JACOB: I wasn't home then: ask your husband.
RITA: Janis only talks about himself.
JACOB: You know, I think I wouldn't be able to fuck him – no matter what gifts he gave me. You're quite a broad.
RITA: It was a youthful marriage of convenience ... but it hasn't been so bad ...
JACOB: Who is he? That prince of your dreams?
RITA: A good man. Not rich, but good. A traffic cop...
JACOB: Did you blow into his breathalyzer?
RITA: Is there not such a thing as fate? He stops thousands during the day! ...
JACOB: A real dick? There's a difference, isn't there?
RITA: Ugh!!! ... I don't understand how you get rid of those women of yours: I absolutely pursued him, not even for a second can I imagine – that is ...that is ... it's totally a different kind of absolute...
JACOB: See, what a hard life I have! ...
RITA: No, not only because of the sex...
JACOB: Your husband is the voice of our nation, woman! ...
RITA: Janis cannot even imagine how we feel with you, can he?
JACOB: Do you know how I feel?
RITA: I sometimes imagine how you, all your life ... well, have wanted to fly off! ... Why did you leave here? How old were you?
JACOB: Twelve.
RITA: Only? ... The old man had really raised a ruckus – Janis said.
JACOB: I hadn't even kissed that girl – we were only playing doctor and patient ...
RITA: The old folks were themselves raised like that...
JACOB: He squeezed my balls in a vice – a carpenter's, small ones: “ones that you can carry around with you, to do various jobs” so father said... And he tied my hands behind my back...
RITA: Stop!
JACOB: The most effective sterilization in the world.
RITA: You're bullshitting!
JACOB: Should I be?

Rita embraces Jacob and for a moment holds him tight.

RITA: You know, I ... I would like right now with you ... that is, if I, if I didn't have a guy...

JACOB: After this story all of them usually stand nude at attention!

RITA: Idiot!!! ...I didn't get taken in!!! You were bullshitting, right? Bullshitting? I can't be fooled so easily! ...

JACOB: How much do you want to get from the divorce?

RITA: I have little left if it happens because I'm found to be the guilty party – I already made sure of that.

JACOB: Even if I wanted to, I won't be able to put someone else under Janis.

RITA: What would you do in my place?

JACOB: First of all I would pay someone to keep quiet.

RITA: I don't have any money! ...

JACOB: For a false notice the payment has been found. Arnie and I will have to live here somehow. For the rest you'll have to write an IOU. With the conditional clause that in case of a divorce all of it will be honorably settled, fear not.

RITA: You're a lawyer...

JACOB: Fine, don't write...

RITA: And afterward what?

JACOB: And afterward you'll leave me all your stash of grass when you leave.

RITA: What guarantee do I have that you won't blab – for then I'll have to go without two santimes to rub together, bare-assed, but he'll be happy to pay you instead. And you'll have a piece of paper with my signature! ...

JACOB: A refrigerator has a guarantee. I can also offer you nothing.

RITA: But you do ... you understand how I feel, you're really a good person!

JACOB: I'm a shitty person, like all of us.

RITA: I can't even get work anywhere any more – who would hire me? I was a librarian, did you know?

JACOB: Wouldn't you like a quickie after all?

RITA: I'm faithful! ... You do understand, don't you?

JACOB: Arnie won't jerk one off into that jar.

RITA: Jerk yours off on the sly – please! And then he won't need me sterile – he'll start looking around. I have a woman friend ... I'll get less, of course ...

JACOB: Janis isn't so rich that he would make such a fuss.

RITA: His father is behind all this: it wasn't so bad before.

JACOB: Has he not ordered a coat of arms yet?

RITA: Do you know that?

JACOB: A cow with big tits. With three stars at the top. The yogurt empire...

RITA: Have you seen such a thing anywhere?

Jacob laughs.

RITA: Shhh!

JACOB: Your grass isn't so shitty after all.

RITA: I'm not getting high at all ... stress probably ...

JACOB: I've got an idea! Let's go!

Heads for the door.

RITA: You'll wake up Arnie! Maybe he's still a sleepwalker!

JACOB: Let us be the sleepwalkers.

He pulls out of the pile of things a white rag, tears it, giving a half to Rita

RITA: But you did bullshit – about the vice?

JACOB: Do you want to blow on them to make them better?

RITA: Idiot! ... Where are we going?

JACOB: Just come: You're my slave now! Let's go!!! ...

Jacob climbs out of the window. Rita follows. Having thrown the white rags on their heads, the two turn into 'ghosts'. They exit.

After a while Janis' desperate screams are heard and a car alarm wails and flashes. The sound of laughter is heard..

Scene 5

The same place. Just before lunch.

The large bell-shaped object is no longer in the middle of the room. The table is loaded with plastic bags and groceries. Janis is drinking kefir and talking on the phone.

JANIS: *(into a receiver)* ... What the average guy won't do for the sake of his old broad? ... I myself am surprised ... yes, we fucked all night! ... No, Königssee not Sönigssee ... Did you find it? Germany not Austria ... Yes there's a hell of a lake here – directly below the balcony. Yes, Kö-nigs-see... Yes, also a bobsled run. No, no one is doing runs right now: it's summer... Right: totally different people – thank-you at every turn ... Yes, that German language is a total cretinism – *eine schweine...* *(laughs)* Ritakins is already sunning herself ... Yes, yes – Königssee! ... Yes, don't say a word – the car runs like a dream, yes! ... No, it's not nice to fool people: consider that I'm on vacation. Ah, what is it, what do you want? ... Not he, but you are an idiot: I told you – if you have to, rub out the good-before date, so it can't be read! Then you wouldn't have this hassle! ... Of course it's sour – nothing has been sweet ever! ... Fine, send him double the newly made product for free. No, you'll pay for it yourself. Aha, you don't want to? You know my principles ... Oh old man, old man, old man, we're a nation of peasants, all this fine stuff for us... But why are you surprised? A contract at every turn – we'll drown in paper? No! What we have to do is work, do honest work! Then we'll be happy!

Rita enters. She has obviously been sun tanning – she's wearing a bikini with a bath towel wrapped round her.

... Fine old man: we're about to get going here. Yes. Königssee ... *Danke, danke!* ... Don't ruin the nation for me: I'll still need it when I return! ... *(laughs and finishes the conversation).*

RITA: Are we abroad?

JANIS: No, we're sitting right here in some God-forsaken corner of the world, because I don't want to work! No one needs to earn their bread and butter.

RITA: Shall we be traveling long? What are we still thinking of doing here?

JANIS: That guest house on the lake seems to be a very fine establishment – the old women in the store let it slip that today they will even have fireworks: some sort of birthday celebration. City people paying the shot. Why are you standing there?

RITA: You called me.

JANIS: I wonder why?

RITA: To cook something?

JANIS: Yes, fry up the pike – the one that's in the pond.

RITA: We can only make sandwiches here.
JANIS: Oh, I thought you knew how to fry eggs!

Rita starts to make sandwiches.

JANIS: If Arnie is working in that hotel, it can't be so bad – people must accept him to a degree ... No?
RITA: Yes...
JANIS: And what happened to 'honey' ...?
RITA: Yes, honey...
JANIS: Is that from the heart?
RITA: Yes, honey...
JANIS: We've never talked about it, but there's always a first time ... we're at that age, maybe ... when you have to talk about the big things ... I wanted to ask you...
RITA: There's nothing between the two of us, nothing!
JANIS: With whom? ...
RITA: With JC! Nothing!
JANIS: I've never thought so!
RITA: You've just said it.
JANIS: You scared me last night, and the two of you together, and ... will you forgive me? Please forgive me! ... Fine, one shopping spree on me. Am I forgiven now?
RITA: Yes...
JANIS: ... honey (*laughs*). Can I continue now?
RITA: The next time it will be a week of shopping! ...
JANIS: (*laughs*) You like it?
RITA: It's only fair.
JANIS: You like it. That I am as I am. And I'm very happy, believe me. I'm happy that I've been able to give you so much: that can't be denied ... Of course, you've also given to me, but...
RITA: I was willing, but it didn't work for Arnie!
JANIS: Those weren't the right magazines...
RITA: Is that why you ran to the store? There were no right ones?
JANIS: Take that towel off ... Throw it off! ... You're the right one...

A moment of silence, then Rita wraps herself up in the towel once more.

RITA: No!!! ...Do you get it at all? ... You... I'm your wife!!! ...
JANIS: And the only woman in our family...
RITA: You're making me sleep with a stranger!
JANIS: It makes no difference how we get the pollywogs in there. Practically no difference. It's just a different way of doing it. A doctor is more of a stranger than ...
RITA: I've made a vow in church! That's important to me!

JANIS: He probably won't even understand what's happening: he's never had anything. Yes, maybe simply mechanically he'll need some help. It apparently is better when the pollywogs are still warm...

Rita runs out, the door slams behind her.

For a while Janis gazes out of the window, then he begins to eat the sandwiches Rita has made: he's got a very good appetite.

After a while Jacob enters – also from sun tanning – in his briefs, with a towel draped on his head.

JACOB: Ugh! ... I thought you were done for already: such screaming, such fleeing - she must have reached the wood copse in a single breath...

JANIS: I didn't like her sandwiches – and got such a violent reaction right off the bat... Take one, they're edible after all ...

Jacob also eats heartily.

JACOB: You could sun tan here for a week yet – I won't have to die from starvation...

JANIS: That bad?

JACOB: This time yes. I'm even a bit afraid that someone may decide to go to you to ask for something ... You'll give away where I'm hiding, am I right

JANIS: Right you are. I've got an ethical company.

JACOB: Do you want me to milk Arnie?

JANIS: Could you?

JACOB: I can do anything – just not that ...

JANIS: Why don't you ask any questions and why aren't you curious?

JACOB: You've got a problem with your pollywogs ... It's the right solution: within the family circle.

JANIS: And he's not so debilitated – it's not inherited, it's acquired I reckon: it wasn't easy to talk to father after all. The psycho place too...

JACOB: There are still people these days for whom family is important ... I do marvel at you, seriously! For me to take such trouble ...

JANIS: You know, my lads have drawn a coat of arms. Well, our mutual one ...

JACOB: With a cow on it.

JANIS: How did you know that? No, it's not because I have a yogurt empire – it's simply because we, brothers, the family, are like that: good-natured, productive ...

JACOB: The old man fished ...

JANIS: We had drawn fish at first, but it looked funny together with the cow!

JACOB: Three stars at the top?

JANIS: That's a must! When you return to civilization – I'll show it to you!

JACOB: Let's talk about my pollywogs. You wanted me to fill a jar too.

JANIS: But everything is plugged up for you – you said so yourself.

JACOB: I was bullshitting. To get a rise out of you ...

JANIS: Your ...

JACOB: Yes.
JANIS: In a jar?
JACOB: Do you want me to do it directly into Rita?
JANIS: Brother... you, know, you could also do it straight: your specialty, after all, but ... you know ...
JACOB: I'm too striking?
JANIS: Yes, too striking!
JACOB: We need a sort of gray heir to the throne?
JANIS: No, perhaps not a striking one, but ... not too ... Understand, I'll be looking my son in the face and I'll see a distinct person, but if it's Arnie, then ... then I won't see anything. He after all is so ... a bit anonymous...
JACOB: I'm bullshitting – I'm plugged up and everything down there is tied up for me.
JANIS: Cretin! For God's sake, idiot! ... You want to pump more money out of me!
JACOB: Do you want that the two get stitched together?
JANIS: Will you be able to do that?
JACOB: I'm in great need. That means that I'll be able to do it. That means that you'll pay off all debts for me?
JANIS: How much?
JACOB: All. Don't worry, I won't leave you without a stitch to wear on your back: I'm up on your financial situation.
JANIS: How?
JACOB: Victoria. Your bookkeeper.
JANIS: (*after a while*) I thought that she had embezzled some funds from me, because she vanished so quickly, but that wasn't so ...
JACOB: Left? An extraordinary woman – flesh, brains, passion...
JANIS: What sort of guarantee will I get? It wouldn't be hard to hire someone else.
JACOB: Do you want a photo? A video? You want that everything happens purely technically.
JANIS: As much as possible technically. I had a thought to possibly do it with a condom, with only a little hole at the end?
JACOB: That's creative! Good thinking!
JANIS: You just shouldn't get him drunk, you must understand that – so there's no gene mutation...
JACOB: I'm an honorable person.
JANIS: Forgive me, of course ... how long do we still have to stay here?
JACOB: Two nights should be enough.
JANIS: A hi-five on that!

They shake hands – the deal has been finalized. Both continue to eat.

JACOB: Tasty bread. Is it local?

JANIS: This is not such a God forsaken spot after all – that lake guesthouse seemingly is for the ‘white people’. That’s what I heard in the store. This evening they’re going to shoot some fire works across the lake.

JACOB: I’ll have to go by there.

JANIS: Where there are fireworks, there’s money, if money, then city people, if city people, then you could get caught: is there someone in the city you don’t know?

JACOB: Ah, I’ve got a hard-on already!...

JANIS: Watch out for your teeth!

Both laugh.

JANIS: Who would we be if we weren’t brothers? ...Brother...

JACOB: Brother...

JANIS: (*suddenly*) Look! Do you see it?! ...I don’t see it either! That fucking submarine! ...

JACOB: When did this happen?

JANIS: Was it still here during the night?

JACOB: I don’t remember...

JANIS: We would have noticed somebody: he couldn’t lug it out alone... Through the window?

JACOB: “*The one who the strength has got, in place of a head has a pot!*” – remember, we used to chant this when we were kids.

JANIS: You know, I sometimes think that he understands some things ... well, more than it seems to us...

Jacob clicks on the photo album in his camera and flips through some photographs.

JACOB: Look, a whole series. From the outside he looks real enough, but the camera lens is objective – it’s ruthless and true: from his looks a human, but in reality a thing. Look! I took enough to have an exhibition: that would be a blast. A human-thing – that’s how it should be called... life is odd, isn’t it? One has everything, another ... another just a body...

But Janis doesn’t look at Jacob’s photos – he stares out of the window: begins to smile, as if he had seen something.

JANIS: She’s coming back! ...

JACOB: Smiling?

JANIS: Not yet. But she’s a very simple person ... a good person ... for the family...

They both look out of the window for a while at Rita, both smile and wave at her at the same time.

Scene 6

The same place. Evening.

Rita and Janis are standing by the window gazing into the distance – above the lake can be seen fire works, flashes of it now and then light up their smiling faces. The two are talking quietly.

JANIS: I wouldn't have believed it had someone told me about this, I wouldn't have believed it – here, above our lake... Oh, again a red one! ... Ohhhh! ... how beautiful life is, isn't it? ... Love... Are you crying, love?
RITA: (*brushes away her tears*) No, there's nothing to cry about...
JANIS: I already said I'm sorry... You said you understood ...
RITA: I'm not crying...
JANIS: What are you thinking about? ... Ohhhh!
RITA: About us ... Look how beautiful! ...
JANIS: A real Königssee! ...
RITA: A-a-a-a-h!!! ...

The fireworks become more and more splendid.

JANIS: I'll give you as a gift one like that, even grander ... Guess when? On the day he's born. And right here, above the lake: where his ancestors have for centuries fished, fished and multiplied...
RITA: What if it's a girl?
JANIS: It won't be. Can't be.
RITA: But if it is?
JANIS: Then both of your heads will be cut off: didn't you learn that in history in school?
RITA: Yes...
JANIS: ... honey ... You can't even imagine what one little word can do – your little 'yes', your understanding, that I really am suffering. I ...but now I have the strength of a thousand men. I was confused, but now I see our future like I've never seen it before: hundreds, thousands of slaughtered carcasses – meat, meat, meat everywhere you look. Such a plant, such refrigerators only your son will have, just he alone. He'll be a real oligarch. And he'll have fireworks like this every night. He'll buy this lake! ... Are you happy? ... And then he'll marry, have a son and that son will have a son ... and we'll live on forever... you know, I truly believe that my father's spirit is flying about here somewhere. And we'll be right here, because this is our land, our...

The last flash of fireworks is very powerful and blinding.

RITA
& JANIS: A-a-a-a-a-a-ah!!! ...

It's quiet for a moment except for the humming of the grasshoppers.

JANIS: You know, I had a thought ... I wanted to tell you that I can easily imagine myself in your place: well, regarding contact with Arnold ... I probably wouldn't be so calm... But ... I had a thought that I would most certainly be happy if some person close to me helped me ... No, I do understand that it's odd, but I could ... purely from a technical point of view ... I was even thinking that maybe you should take a blanket, cut out a little hole: between you both ... So that there wouldn't be any contact, I thought. I could help ... No, I'm raving, of course, raving. But I really am jealous! You don't even understand, can't imagine what a man feels in such a situation! I'm maybe losing my mind! I'm perhaps sacrificing the most valuable thing that I have! ... Maybe after this ... I'll do myself harm But I will have done it! ... Don't try to comfort me – you don't have to feel sorry for me! ...

But Rita, motionless, is gazing into the night.

RITA: Yes ...

JANIS: Aren't you delighted? ...

RITA: I'm delighted...

JANIS: ... honey (*laughs*). And so you know, just in case JC begins to act somewhat oddly, you tell me, OK: it seems to me that he's totally flipped his lid. Just think, he's also suddenly started to talk about the family! ... See, how contagious it is, it's a major issue ... Do you know where the two of them have taken off to? Arnie surely has to protect the boats from the fireworks, but JC ... he's a real bastard! ... Are you even listening?

RITA: Yes ...

JANIS: ... honey.

A moment's silence as the humming of the grasshoppers becomes quite deafening.

Suddenly the door is flung open, and a bearded man in a jockey hat enters the room.

JANIS: Excuse me, who might you be?

The stranger suddenly starts to laugh out loud, but his laughter is too raucous and forced. His voice too is oddly hollow sounding.

The STRANGER: Cretins!!! ... Cretins and idiots!!! ...

JANIS: I beg you to leave! This is private property! ... Arnold isn't home! ... (*to Rita*) Don't be afraid, love!

The stranger nonetheless comes in further into the dark room. Janis throws himself at him. While the stranger continues to laugh, Janis and he desperately shove each other around the room.

JANIS: (to Rita) Phone! Phone the police! ...Phone!

Rita picks up the phone, but then stops, doesn't phone.

JANIS: Phone!!!

Finally the men fall to the floor. After a brief moment Janis jumps to his feet as if stung – the stranger's jockey hat has come off in his hand complete with the scalp beneath it: the long hair had been glued to the hat.

JANIS: Who are you? ... JC?

The fallen man really does turn out to be Jacob – having ripped off the glued-on beard, he responds with loud sobs. Janis screws a light bulb into the only light fixture in the room – it's very bright.

JANIS: You did sneak over there? (to Rita) I told him: don't go there, you might meet one of your creditors! No – I get a hard on! ... (to Jacob) Now you're in deep shit, right? Were you not followed? Are we to build barricades here! With firearms? You can take off for wherever you wish, but we want to live a normal life! We have plans! I warned you: you can't blame me!

Jacob, however, has attached himself to a vodka bottle – and in one gulp, drinks more than half of it.

JANIS: (to Rita) Lovely! ...What did you cook up? Is someone dead maybe?

Jacob laughs again, then crawls to the spot where they struggled to retrieve his camera – he shows Janis what he has photographed. Bit by bit Janis becomes interested, and after a while he also laughs, somewhat forcedly. Jacob empties the vodka bottle – Janis himself is now intensely clicking through the photo images.

JANIS: (to Rita) Look, Victoria too! Do you remember Victoria? Our bookkeeper, who vanished ... What is she doing here? ... (to Jacob) And is this Vita? Vita or Zita? ... This one you screwed for about half a month, right? Inez? ... All of them are your former girlfriends, all of them? ... Is this some sort of club! ... Could you explain – why at our lakeshore? ... No!!! Look!!!

Finally also Rita becomes interested in the photos – what she sees in them instantly surprises her.

RITA: What is he doing there?! ... He's not a boat guard.
JANIS: *(to Jacob)* It's some sort of performance, don't you think? Maybe it's planned according to some script: that the first person to arrive must be kissed – there is such a game, you know. And Arnie is guarding the boats there and he has arrived...
RITA: Arnie is blowing out the candles on a cake!!! In whose place is he doing that?
JANIS: He would have definitely invited us, we've driven here after all ... *(about the photo)* No!!! That can't be!!!...
RITA: It is so !!! You asked when was his real birthday? ... They are all kissing him ...
JANIS: *(to Jacob)* All your ex broods. Why?
Jacob is crying loudly. Jacob and Rita are looking through the photos.
RITA: Were the fireworks in honor of Arnold? ...
JANIS: Look, that shitty bell! He's climbing inside it! ...
RITA: Consecrating it? With champagne? ...
JANIS: It looks like that ...
RITA: Look, what eyes! How he looks ...
JANIS: He's leering ... And there's live music? ...

Jacob begins to sing loudly and off key – it's a popular song about love and not being able to meet.

JANIS: Shut up!!! ...

Jacob continues and Janis hits him for this, without any visible result.

JANIS: *(to Rita)* Let's leave!!! Pack your things!!! ...
RITA: We aren't invited there ...
JANIS: We're going home! Home!!!
RITA: You've been drinking.
JANIS: You haven't! Get ready!!!
RITA: But we can't leave like that! You can't, you're a brother, you have to somehow reach an understanding ... all of it...

Janis finally stops Jacob's singing with a seriously sharp whack to the back of his head.

JANIS: *(to Rita)* We can't? What's here to keep me? I don't give a damn! Who here can't do something? Or perhaps doesn't want to? ... Beautiful eyes, right? ... *(about a photo)* Look: superman! In red bathing trunks! ... Wow! What jewels! Real Königssee balls! ...

RITA: Are you stupid ?
JANIS: You did want to do it with him, wanted it!
RITA: I wanted? ...
JANIS: No, I did maybe: for Arnie to shove it in for me!!! ...

Rita slaps Janis with force. A moment of silence.

JANIS: *(quietly)* There's no more liquor – all of it has been lapped up? ... I'm going to lose my mind...
RITA: He ... he looks ... happy ...
JANIS: Give me some grass.
RITA: What grass? ...
JANIS: No, of course – I'm out of it already, I don't know anything, do I?

Rita gives Janis a joint, which she has lit.

JANIS: What are we to do now?
RITA: You ... the two of you ... will you finish him off ?
JANIS: Arnie? ... Why? ... Why, for God's sake? ... *(he laughs, too loudly, to Jacob)* I've got an idea! In my car there's a colt 45, let's go! ... Whores! All of them are whores, aren't they?

Jacob, still lying on the floor, begins to sing his off-key song. Janis laughs out loud. Rita gazes out of the window into the endless dark night.

Scene 7

The same place. Late morning the next day.

A mess on the table in the room – as if after a night of partying. Amongst the chaos on the floor can be seen the bare legs of a sleeping and immobile Jacob. Rita, crawling, is trying to reach him but is totally unsuccessful – around her ankle is a metal ring, which is attached to a short chain screwed to the floor in the corner.

RITA: Don't pretend, get up!!! ... Where's Janis? Unchain me!!! ... There must be a key somewhere – you said so yourself! ... Jacob! ...

But Jacob doesn't react nor does Rita manage in any way to reach him. Suddenly she abruptly stops moving.

RITA: Jacob? ...JC... Are you breathing? Jacob!!! ... Breathe! ... *(loudly)* Janis!!! Help!!! ...

Rita's despair reverberates in the silence. She continues to try to get the metal ring off her ankle, but in vain.

RITA: You're alive, aren't you? At least move a finger ... Fine, as you wish ... You would have shot him, wouldn't you? ... Janis was going to buy a gun, when he became an honest-to-goodness millionaire – because it's a different status. I wish you had seen your face when there wasn't any gun there: Janis barely managed to escape. Do you remember anything at all? ... You would have pulled the trigger, wouldn't you? You both would have ... You know those images will always flash before my eyes: they were so happy there... Yes, yes, yes – forgive me, but I can't not talk about it. You know, I could even now say screw it all and divorce Janis just like that: so what if I get only a tenth... *(suddenly)* I need a telephone!!! I want to live!!! ... *(she tries to get up, but the chain pulls her back down)* From those fairy tales of yours I understood that this chain was in the garden on the half-hewn apple tree: that's where you were tied up, not in this room? Did you have two? ... You moved! You hear me! Stop fooling around! One must live on despite all, what else can one do? ... I understand you, but ... Where has Janis taken off to? Stop pretending! Better tell me what he's concocted now – that Arnie's pollywogs are even more valuable, or else that only the moron was of use? ... Who gives a damn, anyway! What am I to do now? ... You know, I probably will tell him everything as it is! And be done with it!!! That I want a divorce. And that I'm beginning a new life ... Just try to even whisper to him about the

fake analysis – I will clamp you into a real vice! ... But what difference does it make: let him know, know it all! ...

Suddenly the sound of a motor is heard – a car drives into the yard. The sound of a horn.

RITA: He's coming! You'll help me?! Do you hear? At least defend me – he won't understand anything, of course! Will you help? ...

As the door opens, Rita quickly falls silent and pretends that she's asleep. Janis enters the room holding a metal saw. He sits down on the floor beside Rita and begins to tenderly stroke her hair. Janis is quietly smiling. He even begins to croon a lullaby. Rita pretends to wake up.

RITA: Honey? ... Is it you? ...

JANIS: Sleep, sleep, sleep...

RITA: What time is it? Are you hungry?

JANIS: I'll make some sandwiches myself, sleep...

RITA: Are you sick? ...

JANIS: No, I'm fine, really fine ... Everything has been resolved. He respects us. He doesn't feel at all insulted. It was a misunderstanding that we weren't invited, a terrible misunderstanding.

RITA: Did he say so?

JANIS: Victoria has totally changed, she's a different person – incredible: we talked it all out. The women there are almost all Jacob's, but there's nothing odd there, as it turns out. Jacob always used to wear a mask – his official address still is here and that's why his dumped women have formed a line and knocked on Arnie's door.

RITA: There's not even a proper bed here ...

JANIS: They themselves had the lake hotel built there – one had more money, the others threw some more in...

RITA: So that Arnie would service them there?

JANIS: It's something else ... some sort of idyll. I asked all sorts of questions, but didn't manage to find out anything about sex, only that ... it's not possible to explain, it must be lived...

RITA: Some kind of commune: one with all, all with one, and together?

JANIS: No, I think. I didn't understand it fully. Arnold is, of course, a man of iron but it's not even possible ... We're invited today! They all want to meet Arnold's younger brothers. And to take you along ... Not one derogatory word about JC: as if he never had lived in this world ... *(to Jacob)* You hear? Everyone there is almost grateful to you – maybe even would pay for the service...

RITA: Is he even breathing? Go look! I'm somewhat uneasy ...

Janis shakes Jacob.

JANIS: Wake up! Good news, old chap: we, you are almost idolized ... well, in any case, no one will tear off your weenie? ... Why are you staring like that?

RITA: Is he breathing?

JANIS: Through his ass especially ... Get up, the show continues! ... *(to Rita, about the saw)* Look here, the key!

RITA: What key?

JANIS: Get up, come here!

Rita gets up and then, because of the chain, falls.

RITA: Did you lock me up? So that I too wouldn't run to Arnie of my own free will?

JANIS: There's a totally different atmosphere there!

RITA: Last night you didn't know that yet.

JANIS: You yourself wanted to try it!

RITA: I locked myself up?

JANIS: You were yelling all sorts of nonsense: that you wanted it, that you felt like it! It was quite scene – do you not remember anything?

RITA: Did you tell Arnie about that?

Janis doesn't respond – but sets to sawing the metal ring around Rita's ankle. Rita is forced to hold her leg awkwardly up high.

RITA: Did you talk about everything with Arnie? All of it, as it is? And what have you planned. Maybe don't even unchain me: he'll be able to find me easily – I won't go of my own free will! You know, I suddenly feel that I in my life ... I want ...

JANIS: You'll have it. And everything will happen exactly as you've dreamed. We'll have an heir, from the two of us, our own seed. I know now ...

RITA: Victoria? Does she know?

JANIS: Yes, now I know, know – I understand ...

RITA: Honey ... But you must understand how I feel sometimes ... it wasn't intended in a bad way, I ... I just simply wanted, that we...

JANIS: Oh!!! ...Can't you feel that I'm sawing into your leg? Look, blood! ...

RITA: Ah! ... And you want to free me?

JANIS: Sometimes I'm a good person ...

RITA: I can also do it myself! ...

She takes the saw away from Janis and begins to saw the chain very awkwardly.

JANIS: A piece of the chain will remain hanging from your leg!

RITA: It'll be a symbol! ... I, myself, let me do it!

Janis takes the saw away from Rita.

JANIS: Are you still high?
RITA: You know everything, and I know, know very well, how you are when you know something! ...
JANIS: Yes, I now know... my pollywogs aren't born below, but they're born here (*points to his head*) – how we think is how we live. And if I somehow act wrongly, then I don't have them ... I, we have to only understand, what is wrong and then ... we'll be happy. Victoria told me about one instance, when ...

Rita interrupts Janis and embraces him tightly. Both sob.

RITA: Honey ... honey...
JANIS: You knew it already, didn't you? We, guys, sometimes are so stupid, so insensitive... You did know it, didn't you? ... Thank-you! ... Maybe it won't happen so soon, but it will happen, it will!
RITA: Honey ... I ...I ... Will I be chained for long yet?
JANIS: Forgive me! Maybe really I haven't been sensitive enough ...
RITA: Saw, for God's sake!!!
JANIS: (*laughs*) I'm losing my head! From happiness, right?

Janis with great zeal sets to sawing. Now he doesn't even notice that Rita is squirming and moaning from pain.

RITA: My ... my foot is cut off! ...
JANIS: Blood! Forgive me, love – I didn't notice! ...

He desperately searches through the dusty chaos, for something to bind up Rita's foot – finally he takes off his shirt and ties it round her foot.

JANIS: Forgive me! How do you feel?
RITA: ...honey? ...
JANIS: How do you feel honey?
RITA: Now you can't say no to me!
JANIS: Shopping! Three days, but next month.
RITA: No, we have to find out what's wrong ...
JANIS: Yes! ... I don't even know... (*about his nude chest*) Am I... am I sexy?
RITA: We have to think differently. Differently – you said so yourself!
JANIS: I won't say no – to anything!
RITA: Does it not seem to you that we have to think a bit ... well, each of us, on our own ... for about three days each week, let's say...
JANIS: Yes ... we won't talk for three days?
RITA: You'll rent an apartment for me. And for three days you won't even come anywhere near it.
JANIS: Yes, of course, yes...
RITA: Don't we have to leave?

JANIS: It won't be cheap...
RITA: Others build houses by lakes to understand what life is really about.
JANIS: Yes, of course. Love, how quickly you understood everything! I was afraid...
RITA: Wake up the hero!

Janis hurries to shake Jacob, slaps his cheeks.

JANIS: Don't you want to live? Don't you? ... Nothing doing, brother, I'll force you to! Life is beautiful! Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful!
RITA: Did you have two chains: one by the apple tree, the other here?
JANIS: JC once when he was chained there, on the third day out of boredom cut down that apple tree – that's why only the stump is left. Then the old man screwed the chain to the floor here, in the corner ... *(to Jacob)* I'll help you find a full life again...
RITA: Where did he get a saw? Who brought it to him?
JANIS: How should I know? I certainly didn't.

Janis helps Jacob to his feet – he's wearing only briefs. Jacob's eyes really are wide open, but they're staring into nothingness. Jacob must be pushed, held and supported – Janis puts pants and a shirt on him.

RITA: Jacob told me that his father had clamped his jewels into a vice – was that bullshit?
JANIS: Probably he had earned it. The screams were dreadful.
RITA: Is that why he ran away from home?
JANIS: Do you think so? I don't remember ... *(to Jacob)* Do you want the money?

Jacob finally focuses on his surroundings.

JANIS: *(laughs)* We want it too! Who doesn't? ...*(to Rita)* Prop him up! ...

Rita is limping quite noticeably, but she supports the stiff Jacob from one side – while the half-nude, sweating Janis holds him up under his other arm.

JANIS: How good, isn't it? ... How good that we're here! Here and now! ... And it will get better, right? ...

All of them, stumbling and falling head out of the room. They exit.

Scene 8

The same place. Evening.

The sun is setting and sinking ever lower, hence the light during this scene slowly becomes more and more bright and red/brighter and redder.

The door quickly springs open and Rita, in large rubber boots rushes in visibly distraught, her hair mussed up. Having come inside, she makes a call on her cell phone. Rita half-whispers into the phone so as not to be overheard.

RITA: *(into the receiver)* ...Love? ... Yes, yes, yes – now I can again! ...Love, how I want you!!! That badly, yes! ... Yes, he laughed the whole time about that contraption, but then JC chickened out and refused to get into it, Janis had to stand up and be a man, so that Arnie would see that he was no snot nose: well, you do understand! ... He barely fit into that bell! Drove out to the island and lowered it into the water: dreadfully deep – I was looking on from the shore! It seems to me that down under there he must have regretted immediately that he had dived in at all ... And then everything went haywire and broke – the ropes, the cables swung in the air, snap, snap, snap! ... And I just looked on – Jacob also leapt overboard into the lake from the other side: of course, I immediately took off! I had to disappear! Yes, that's how it was. Arnold took advantage of the opportunity, to get revenge: You simply don't understand it, don't know how it was! I'm not a fool: seemingly the ropes tore, everything went up in the air – an accident on water! I alone can understand it all! ... Because of what? Because they didn't ... didn't particularly love Arnold... Well, yes, but what if it's not nonsense? What if he's coming to find me as we speak? ... No, I acted normally, was good with him, but I don't know at all what I would do in his place. ... Yes, maybe ... I don't know! I'm afraid!!! How can I be calm? ... No, of course, it's clear – it's fate, it is! But I can't allow myself to think like that, understand? Love!!! ... I'm so unhappy! ... It will be suspicious! ... As if you had been called to come out? But you aren't in the police division that deals with murder ... No, I would want to, very much want to: I really don't know what to do at all with drowning people ... No, it could be that Arnold isn't at all like that, I really don't know ... You can't even imagine what's happening in that commune of theirs! Yes, they all live together! ... No, each has their own room, but when they all come together, then all of them are so ... No, for sure, nothing special, but it's not like that elsewhere ... You know, I think that all of them don't need anything more in life: that's totally abnormal. They have everything, and the cog in the wheels in their heads no longer spin all the time. They all hugged JC like with some neighborhood kid who's shit in his pants. If it wasn't for him, these women wouldn't even be in this place, would never have met Arnold, blah-blah-blah ... Afterward

they all sit in silence – sit for five minutes and smile! Such a silence that one can lose one's mind! ... No, I'm not getting carried away by all this! ... Yes, he is a very good-looking man, but I wouldn't ... stop that, you're about to insult me: it's not so! ... And what if he is already racing over here – a widow from sorrow could, let's say, hang herself from a light fixture! I don't know what to expect of him: he's spent time in a psycho ward! He doesn't talk at all, he's mute! ... No, they communicated somehow, with little pieces of paper I think. I really don't know, don't torture me! I'm afraid!!! ... In how many hours? Will you make it? ... And what if one of those women of his, his female soldiers, have already been commandeered to find me – Arnold just has to wave his baby finger: they'll race to do his bidding! No, but it seems like it! ... No, I'm not getting carried away! I'm so unhappy, love! ... Someone's coming!!! ... I'm done for!!! ...

Rita ends the phone call and hurries to find a place to hide – finally crawls into the middle of the piled up things. One of her rubber boots has been left outside in a very visible spot, but Rita obviously does not realize it.

Someone really is coming– the sound of heavy footsteps can be heard, and then the door opens. Arnold stands in the doorway: wet, hair mussed up, covered with slime, in long rubber boots. But still quietly smiling – like always.

He immediately notices Rita's boot, but doesn't approach it – it looks like Arnold is continuing to move quietly as if not to disturb a sleeping person. He very purposefully is looking for something – he pulls out from all the corners all that had been organized during the previous few days: there are instruments, various pieces of iron and cables.

At a given moment Rita suddenly jumps to her feet – even frightening Arnold. She's holding an empty vodka bottle and tries to break off the lower half, as she's seen in films, but doesn't succeed.

RITA: Yes, yes, yes – I'm here! Don't come near me!!! ... I'll defend myself, I won't fall into a trap on my own steam! ... I understand everything, I know! And there's no need to convince me! I know all and understand all! All, I say! And know ... of course, that won't be good now, what I'm about to say, but know ... that you're right, you acted altogether correctly! If you wouldn't have done it, then they themselves would have finished you off! They were looking for a weapon! They couldn't live with it! That, which you are in reality! They are small-minded pigmies ! Were! ... God, how horrendous!!! ... Don't come near!!! ... I'll now leave by this door, but you have to know that I ... that I'm on your side! And always have been, and that's the truth. You haven't heard one bad word from me ever, have you! I understand and I support you! ... Step aside, I'm going out!

Arnold does steps aside. After a while Rita stops trying to sneak past him.

RITA: You're a fantastic person – you trust people! Thank you! ... I just wanted to also say that you can depend on me. No matter how dreadful it may be, I now am a very well-to-do woman. And I won't throw my money around. I think that we could invest something in the lakeshore, in those diving things, those balloons You'll be able to continue the family. Just take this as it's intended, I'm not thrusting myself at you – you already have sufficient warmth there for your heart as it is. But, should you think of it, I'm a very liberal person ... And a woman ... Have you noticed?

ARNOLD: Yes...

A moment of frozen silence – Rita can't hide the extent of her surprise. Arnold speaks slowly –like a man who does it rarely.

RITA: You ... you've been concealing: now I understand! You simply didn't want to talk to us, am I right?

ARNOLD: No ...

RITA: No to what? You didn't want to speak or you wanted to, but didn't?

ARNOLD: You didn't ask me anything.

RITA: You only speak when someone asks you something?

ARNOLD: If someone asks, then they want to hear.

RITA: And we just wanted to talk all the time?

ARNOLD: Yes.

RITA: And you never, ever wanted to tell us something? To your brothers? To that sperm maniac! Did you not want to say something?

ARNOLD: No.

RITA: Did you understand that he was doing all of it for his own sake?

ARNOLD: Yes.

RITA: And you didn't say anything?

ARNOLD: He himself knew everything.

RITA: That's insane! ... And those women of yours also stay because of that? So that you patiently will listen when they spill all about their tragedies and dramas! Have you thought about that?

ARNOLD: No.

RITA: They're using you! You're absolutely ideal! That's why they came running here! The ones that were running about there are your children, aren't they? How many?

ARNOLD: Five.

RITA: And you're supporting all of those women?

ARNOLD: We live together.

RITA: Thank God, you're not totally ideal! And you all live there at the lakeshore?

ARNOLD: Yes.

RITA: What do you do in this house? Work – nail, forge, plane?

ARNOLD: Yes.

RITA: So that you won't make where you live into a pigsty?
ARNOLD: It's better that way.
RITA: This is your father's home, your ancestral home. Do you understand that?
ARNOLD: Yes.
RITA: Isn't that important to you?
ARNOLD: It's a good house still.
RITA: And your children don't have our last name?
ARNOLD: Right.
RITA: Now I'll tell you something: I finally have figured it all out! You were your mom's favorite son, and that's why she herself placed you in that psycho ward – to protect you from your father. She sacrificed JC. No, he simply couldn't be passed off as insane, and then she saved JC the only way she knew how. All she could do is bring him the saw – to hack off the top of the apple tree. When his balls were in that vice, she probably got a blue eye: for poking her nose where she shouldn't have. I even think that JC took off with mom's-made sandwiches. But Janis immediately understood, how a real son of his father should think. Why aren't you saying anything?
ARNOLD: What?
RITA: Was it, like I'm telling it?
ARNOLD: Not quite.
RITA: Yes it was! And your mom made sure she drove off that cliff! It wasn't a road accident, when she killed herself.
ARNOLD: I don't now. I wasn't there.
RITA: And in the psycho ward it was better not to talk?
ARNOLD: Now, that's right.
RITA: And you have never, ever done what you yourself have wanted?
ARNOLD: I do everything that I want.
RITA: That diving you do is funded, isn't it? For you, the father of the tribe – for the sake of peace! Isn't it so – the women pay for it, don't they?
ARNOLD: I myself made it ...
RITA: Why do you need it?
ARNOLD: It's unusual.
RITA: Here, above the water, there's nothing unusual, absolutely nothing?
ARNOLD: All of it is as it is.
RITA: Without dreams, without a purpose, without passion! ... How boring a person you are! Do you understand?
ARNOLD: I don't know.

Rita suddenly hugs Arnold tightly and kisses him.

RITA: Just don't think that I'm joining the troops! That wouldn't even be ethical now – in this situation... Did your brothers even know that you only speak when someone asks you a question?
ARNOLD: Yes.

RITA: Just think, I hadn't even imagined that you communicate, or even talk. With little pieces of paper, I thought, with some sort of signs ... Don't think now that I'm not trying to come on to you ... I really do believe what I said: I don't blame you. You did want to drown them, had you planned it?

ARNOLD: No, it was an accident...

RITA: Oh, don't!!! ...I'll be picked up soon, I'll leave and I'll be happy, perhaps. Just don't question me. Let's stay good friends, shall we?

ARNOLD: Yes.

RITA: Now, strangle me if you wish ... just accidentally ... When will the funeral be?

ARNOLD: For whom?

RITA: (*laughs*) For me...

Suddenly two wet, covered-in- slime figures appear in the window – Janis is carrying the lower part of the bell like a suit jacket, Jacob is inside the upper part: only his briefs and bare legs can be seen. The bell is substantially damaged– the projector hooks have been torn off.

A moment of silence.

Then Rita screams in despair. When Janis responds with a loud and threatening bark, she, stumbling, rushes through the doorway and away. Janis is obviously preoccupied with something else – he pushes Jacob through the window into the room, then lifts the bottom half of the bell into the room and climbs in himself. He is very upset, but purposeful: he wants to mend the bell as soon as possible. It's understood just from Janis' actions and the incoherent sounds he makes: it seems that words lag behind the great volume of what he wants to say. He organizes, gives orders, and collaborates, sometimes mercilessly hitting Jacob, who, according to him, is not fast enough or quick-witted enough. But he treats Arnold with respect – recognizing him as an expert. Someone seeing Janis for the first time would assume that this person is without question insane.

JACOB: (*whispers to Arnold*) He didn't want to wait, he ...

Again Jacob receives a slap across the back of his head – for talking needlessly. Janis' incomprehensible comments increase, he can no longer keep quiet.

JACOB: (*whispers to Arnold*) Call an ambulance! The paramedics! An ambulance...

Janis without pity shuts Jacob up. Then he appears to ask Arnold something. Seemingly Arnold understands.

ARNOLD: Two extra seams will be enough ...

Now Janis just mumbles questioningly, but Arnold responds calmly. The activity doesn't stop.

ARNOLD: Yes, of course.
JANIS: #&*
ARNOLD: Yes, the water's very warm
JANIS: *#&
ARNOLD: It's a wonder, yes.
JACOB: Why did he start making a fuss there?

Janis again tries to quiet Jacob, and again asks Arnold something.

ARNOLD: Better tomorrow.

But Janis suddenly becomes aggressive and attacks Arnold. Jacob rushes to help Arnold and hits Janis so many times on his back, that Janis retaliates – now he attacks Jacob. But Jacob manages to evade him and flee, quickly jumping out of the window. Janis follows him. Both exit. Sounds of Janis pursuing Jacob are heard – both leave the yard. Arnold, however, looks as if nothing has happened and continues to mend the bell. After a while Jacob rushes through the door – out of breath, he rests his back against the door.

JACOB: Call an ambulance!!! Why just stand there?
ARNOLD: There's no phone.
JACOB: He wants to drown himself again.
ARNOLD: We'll mend it.
JACOB: He was too long without oxygen – his brain cells have died! Do you not understand?
ARNOLD: It's not the first time.
JACOB: Have you seen him like that before?
ARNOLD: You too.
JACOB: When he spilled some tea on himself?
ARNOLD: Mom said so to the neighbors. That's why it hurt, why he was going crazy. Dad had pulled down the stork's nest. Janis wanted to put it back.
JACOB: Janis? The nest?
ARNOLD: Those storks fly high. Away. White. Beautiful.
JACOB: And drop shit on everyone else's heads! ... What's at the bottom of the lake that's so similar?
ARNOLD: I don't know, he was the first one down.
JACOB: A black, cold asshole. Castles, emeralds, diamonds?
ARNOLD: Father said that nets always got caught there.
JACOB: The old man?
ARNOLD: In his youth he himself had dived below. Nearly drowned. Wasn't successful.

JACOB: Aha!!! ... And afterward he dumped all his anger on us! ... Janis also got it that time? About the nest?
ARNOLD: He fled. Into the woods. Father. Janis ran with a knife.
JACOB: The old man fled?
ARNOLD: Came back with Michelson's rifle.
JACOB: Did he shoot?
ARNOLD: Mom managed to persuade Janis. Dug a hole, buried that nest. Behind that spruce, that hillock.
JACOB: The nest was buried? Where is Rex's grave?
ARNOLD: They're together. He was put in the nest. Rex only listened to Janis.
JACOB: The old man shot him?
ARNOLD: He shot.
JACOB: At Janis?
ARNOLD: Rex ran in front of him.
JACOB: I just remember the scalding – why?
ARNOLD: Mom took us away. To our neighbors.
JACOB: But those blessed birds shit on everything! ...

Suddenly the door is flung open. Jacob, who has been leaning against the door inside, flies into the room. Janis has returned, and begins to chase Jacob. When it seems that Jacob is just about done for, Arnold grabs Janis, and, despite Janis' desperate attempts to resist, Arnold drags him outside – both exit.

A moment of silence follows except for the sound of Jacob trying to get his breath back, and the noise of the brothers fighting in the yard. Jacob gives a start as the door opens – it's Rita. She runs to the window, to look out into the yard.

RITA: (*whispering*) He'll strangle Janis! Why? What's happening with you all?
JACOB: You're already celebrating! The guy with the breathalyzer is already here?
RITA: (*suddenly breaks into tears*) You think you know me? ... No one knows me! ...
JACOB: (*aping her*) They cried more convincingly in that serial!
RITA: (*about what's happening in the yard*) It's insane! ... O-o-oh! That's not Janis! ... They're beasts.
JACOB: Janis ... he maybe ... Do you believe that there is another world? ...
RITA: Amen! ... (*about the yard*) O—o-oh!!!...
JACOB: You said that a man can fly, that the universe is something else...
RITA: Why didn't he drown?
JACOB: You can't! Can't live like that! You have to tell Janis everything! Do you want me to help you?
RITA: You?
JACOB: Yes, I'm a monster, but sometimes it's ... the day comes, when someone ...
RITA: (*aping him*) In that serial they cried more convincingly! ...

The door opens and Arnold enters – he’s been hurt: his lip is even cut open.

JACOB: Where ... where is Janis?
RITA: *(about the yard)* Still alive. But put in his place – down.
JACOB: *(to Arnold)* This isn’t right. Not right! We have to do something! ...
RITA: He has to be asked, else he won’t reply!
JACOB: What are we to do now? Maybe we ... we don’t need to ... to dive down there and see it?
ARNOLD: I don’t know.
JACOB: You know!!! You do! You do! You know everything!!! ...

Jacob throws himself at Arnold. Although he’s not a serious opponent, Arnold has to work at shaking off his brother. Now also Jacob has a cut lip.

RITA: *(glancing into the yard)* Janis has gone! ...
JACOB: Be happy! Maybe he drowned finally – in the pond! ...

But then the door opens and Janis stands on the doorstep –he also has a cut lip. But Janis is smiling. He’s holding the same pike that Arnold had brought and Rita had lost. From Janis’ ankle dangles the end of a chain: he has obviously been tied up somewhere but has freed himself.

JANIS: *(about the pike)* Look, it was in the bushes. It had jumped out on shore, by itself. We jump in, it jumps out – suicide. Because of the pond. The pond is a pond: there’s nowhere to dive. It’s all clear. Just around and around in circles we go. *(to Arnold)* You surprised me. Thanks. But ... it’s hard now, you know ... I’m nervous ...

Suddenly Rita pulls out a gun from her jacket pocket and awkwardly aims it, making Jacob laugh. Then Rita shoots. Arnold falls and remains motionless.

JACOB: A police
RITA: You wanted this! You both wanted this! ...
JACOB: That’s different! ... Janis! ...
RITA: *(to Janis)* You were only defending yourself.
JACOB: She wants to have you jailed, I know! *(to Rita)* Is your fellow still waiting in the car? ...
RITA: You can still leave!
JACOB: They’re my brothers!!! ... *(to Janis)* I know everything, about the nest! ...
RITA: You have a repulsive voice, did you know?

Jacob rushes to take the gun away from Rita, but she shoots again – also Jacob falls and shows no signs of life.

RITA: (To Janis) Now you really have stepped over the defense boundary. Plus the theft of a police weapon. And you'll be raped in jail. It looks bad.
JANIS: Who are you? ...
RITA: Aha! Starting to pretend?! Long-term oxygen deprivation, the brain gone to mush, but after half a year we'll be well again? And we'll begin everything from the beginning again ... (*aping him*) The pike jumped out of the pond ...
JANIS: I did understand something
RITA: You still have a chance, dear.
JANIS: All of us have, all...
RITA: Forgive me...

Rita presses the gun against Janis' chest, shoots – also Janis falls and doesn't move any more. Then Rita carefully wipes away the fingerprints from the gun and presses the gun into Janis' hand. The sunset is already very bright.

Rita makes a phone call.

RITA: (*into the receiver – disguising her voice*) ... Officer 54... 54, this is the base calling! ...Can you hear me? This is the base? Do you hear? ... (*in her own voice*) The sun hasn't set yet. Look – the apple trees are red ... Do you know how to fry a pike? ... No, it turned out somewhat differently ... more differently than that ... still more differently ... Yes, I'm alone, I'm waiting ... I hear, hear you well, love ... Yes, I hear...Hear, hear... hear ...

It looks as if the conversation isn't finished but Rita terminates the call. A moment of silence.

Then she takes the recently-placed gun out of Janis hand and again begins to wipe it carefully. Her phone is ringing insistently, but Rita doesn't pay any attention to it any longer, so it eventually falls silent. Having put the wiped gun in the middle of the table, she picks up Janis mobile and phones.

RITA: (*into the phone, disguising her voice*) ... Police? ... Here's one of your own, a cop in a shoot up, yes! ... Oh, my God, help...

She forcefully throws the phone down and it breaks into smithereens.

When Rita looks out of the window for the last time, the sun disappears below the horizon – it quickly turns dark. Rita hurries through the doorway and leaves.

Then streaks of blue light cut through the darkness – a police car with its lights flashing approaches the house. The bell-like object is shining brightly in the middle of the room. After a while something moves in the

*room – Arnold lifts his head, then stands up. He looks over at Janis, then
Jacob: both are dead.
The flashing lights come closer and seem to multiply.
He quietly smiles once more.*

* * *