

The Well
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A list of characters

SIMONA

LENA

MOTHER

FATHER

Respondents in a poll

1st MAN

2nd MAN

1st WOMAN

2nd WOMAN

Scene 1

A kitchen table and chairs are on the stage. Two large monitors are installed next to the stage. We see what Sima is filming, as well as the input by individual respondents.

SIMA (*in the auditorium amidst spectators, holding a camera, the image is being projected on the monitors*) So ... Hi. I am Simona and I want to ask you kindly whether you can help me with my end-of-year project. This is an audio-visual project on the theme of – the title is terrifying: The Deteriorating Global Environment and Its Impact on the Disintegration of Society. It's not my fault. That's the assignment I got at school. The project will also include answers by ordinary people to some poll questions. I know you're waiting for a show, but would you give me a minute before it starts? How about you? (*addresses a spectator*) Do you think that, as an individual, there is anything you can do for the environment? What specifically?

SPECTATOR (*answer*)

SIMA How do you perceive climate change? Do you think it has any impact on the society?

SPECTATOR (*answer*)

SIMA Thank you, and everyone. Now enjoy the show.

Sima steps on the stage.

Scene 2

SIMA (*Throughout the performance, we only hear chapter titles from the speakers.*)
Chapter 1. Family

SIMA (*We see on the monitors what Sima is filming.*) This is my home and my family is somewhere here. I think this family is best to present to me the disintegration of the society ... Mum? Are you home? I have nearly finished my project. I have about ten respondents in the poll. Some were quite interesting. I still need to film the family and that's it. Hello, anybody home?

MOTHER Turn on the radio. I'd like to listen to the news.

SIMA (*ratty*) Mum, not now. It would disturb me. I've got to finish the project. Check the news online.

MOTHER They shut down the internet. Everything is upside down. Lena was due back an hour ago, Dad went looking for her. And I can't even reach them. (*She takes her mobile phone, tries to make a call.*)

SIMA. Well, you shouldn't have let her out there. (*to the camera*) Lena is an activist ... She's involved in ... what's the name? It has an awfully long name ... Association of Opponents of ... of ... Probably Everything. (*laughs*) She has very strong opinions. In that she probably takes after Dad, because Mum and I are more of a conciliatory nature. Even today, she is protesting somewhere in the streets. Though she was supposed to be at home and Dad went looking for her. If he finds her, he'll throw a tantrum. He'll pull out the rules again and lecture us in discipline. Lena will be yelling mad, shouting those slogans of hers. Mum will attempt some reconciliation and I'll record it all so we can analyse it at school.

MOTHER Ringing and ringing, though no answer. God, let them come back. Are you going to turn on the radio or not ?!

SIMA Yeah right, on the radio they'll surely tell you what's going on with our Lena.

LENA (*shouting, enters the room*) Dad, Dad! It's here! They're everywhere. They also broke through the second barrier. There are thousands of them. They're moving onto the city hall ... They want to get to the water. (*perplexed*) Where's Dad?

SIMA (*quietly to the camera*) Lena came home. Here comes the tantrum.

MOTHER Father went looking for you. Which way did you come in? I didn't see you at all.

LENA Through the gardens. I had to get rid of them. They were following me. Turn off the light. I don't want them to find me.

MOTHER Who? Lena, what's going on?

LENA You wouldn't understand.

MOTHER I'll try to ring Dad you're home.

LENA No! Put down the phone. It might be bugged.

SIMA (*quietly to the camera, giggling*) Didn't I say it would be fun? My sister's brilliant. Now she comes up with some fantastic story to get away with her being late.

MOTHER Lena, stop alarming me and tell me what this is all about.

SIMA I'm also interested, it's a vital part of my project.

LENA We should start packing. Only the essentials! We already have the others in the bunker. Try to speed up. Best if you can do it in an hour. Better in half. The well will have to be guarded. I'll take a shower and will join you. (*leaving*) I hope Dad comes back in the meantime.

SIMA Mum ... ?

MOTHER Yes?

SIMA Is Lena alright? What bunker is she going on about? Did you get it?

MOTHER (*after a while, mothering*) Simmie, the world has changed. You're grown now, you've probably noticed. Things are no longer the way they used to be. We'll have to leave the house for a while. Go, pack up.

SIMA Are you all gone mad? Where do you want to go?

MOTHER There is a bunker under our cellar. And there's a well in the bunker.

SIMA We have our own water?

MOTHER Did it never seem strange to you that we don't have to queue for the water ration?

SIMA Are we going to live in a bunker?

MOTHER You heard. We'll go there as soon as Dad gets home.

SIMA And where did the bunker come from?

MOTHER I'll explain everything to you, but later. Now throw what you can into the trunk. Especially warm clothes.

Scene 3

SIMA Daddy!

FATHER (*entering*) Is Lena home?

SIMA Got here a while ago ...

MOTHER For God's sake, where have you been? I was so worried.

SIMA She said we were to pack up. That we were going to some bunker. Tell me it's not true. Is it?

FATHER The situation changes from hour to hour. And Lena added the fuel. I'm surprised they haven't been looking for her here yet.

MOTHER What did she do?

FATHER She provoked, as always.

MOTHER She will never give up.

FATHER Though she went too far this time.

SIMA Do we have to leave because of her?

FATHER No, not just because of her. It's already started.

SIMA (*frightened*) Is it war?

FATHER This is worse than war. The migrants broke through all the barriers.

SIMA So?

FATHER What so? They want to get to the water.

SIMA Because they are thirsty.

FATHER You seem to like them being here at last.

SIMA Of course not. I, too, am afraid of them. But had the world taken care of them wherever they lived, they wouldn't be here today.

FATHER If a spire wore trousers, it would be the biggest bloke in the village. Now they are here to kill us.

SIMA Why should they kill us?

FATHER Simmie, sometimes you're like a kid. These are Africans. They are like animals. They live in primitive tribes. They eat people. They fight for their territory. And for water. Anyone who gets in their way must be removed. These are the laws of the jungle.

SIMA Come on, Dad, you don't believe this yourself.

FATHER You didn't see it out there. It's an apocalypse! This is about life. I won't wait for some Ahmed to start a fire, so they can have us for dinner. Our only chance is down there, by our well.

Scene 4

Poll

The space changes into a bunker, we follow the poll on the monitors. The poll with respondents should be recorded directly on the street. We hear cars, trams, street traffic is sometimes disrupted by the respondents' monologues. The answers should be as civil as possible. The poll has to seem authentic.

1st MAN (*speaking in a dialect, possibly with an accent*) What was the question?

SIMA Globally deteriorating environment and its impact on the disintegration of society.

1st MAN What can I say about it? You see it all around you.

There is shortage of water across the world. People from Africa are migrating en masse to Europe for the water. Yet we don't even have enough for ourselves.

2nd MAN Wait, let me read something to you ... (*searching on a mobile phone*) At the beginning of our era, there were 170 million people on our planet. In 2050, there will be an estimated 9.3 billion of us. Our Earth can feed a maximum of 10.6 billion people. And then what?

1st WOMAN I've heard that some people have wells dug deep in the ground. They do not rely on water rations. They live down there. And they guard their treasure. I don't know what life must be like. And what do they eat down there?

SIMA Chapter 2. Stocks

The room in the bunker is furnished with furniture made of plastic bottles. Seating, bookcase with encyclopaedias. Pipes run along the walls. Large and small pipes. There is a well on the left. Bunker door, lockable with a numeric code is located centrally. Depending on where the characters go, we sense other spaces on the sides – the parents' bedroom and the girls' bedroom.

Scene 5

The family is sitting on a makeshift sofa made of plastic bottles. With notebooks in their hands, they are comparing data.

FATHER How many canned fish?

MOTHER 6,982. Counted twice.

FATHER Canned meat of various kinds?

SIMA 9,458.

FATHER Lena?

LENA Check. 9,485.

FATHER Hold on, 9,485? This isn't right. It doesn't fit.

LENA Ah, sorry. I misread. 9,458.

FATHER Medications?

MOTHER I put myself in charge of the medication. You know you can count on it.

FATHER All right, just keep an eye on expiration.

MOTHER Sure.

FATHER Honey?

SIMA 12,068 litres. Though some jars are really old.

FATHER Honey is non-perishable, so don't worry. Darling, how many litres did you come up with?

MOTHER I ... I guess I made a mistake, I have one litre less.

FATHER You both are to return to the honey and recount.

SIMA But, Dad ...

FATHER No but. Stocks need to be counted so that we can manage them economically.

LENA I knew you'd say that. I'll spare them the effort. I was counting with Simona, she was wrong. Mum's got it right.

SIMA That can't be. I was careful. I even made marks in my notebook and then recounted them. I definitely wasn't wrong.

LENA Do you want to recount?

SIMA Me? You, guys, go ahead and do it.

LENA You're so stupid it hurts. Fussing about a litre of honey.

FATHER That litre can save our lives one day.

SIMA (*grumbling*) I'd love to know how?

FATHER You don't know how? Let me tell you. What if the situation doesn't change and we have to stay here longer than planned? We will eat up all the supplies but will be convinced that we still have a litre of honey. A litre of this miraculous sap, which is not only antibacterial and contains sugars and so much calories needed, but one that will be our only hope of survival. We'll come to the chamber and, lo and behold, because of your lax approach, there is ... nothing ... instead of honey ... Well? What do we do then?

LENA We'll eat Simona. (*Lena and Sima giggle.*)

MOTHER (*conciliatory*) Girls!

FATHER So you find it funny. As you wish. Tomorrow: wakeup call one hour earlier and a new stock count after warming up.

SIMA Nooooo! We've been counting for three days.

FATHER But you're making mistakes. Each of you will count everything twice. Then we compare the results and if they don't fit, you start right from the beginning.

LENA (*looks at Mum, prodding*) Should we count the medication, too?

MOTHER No, there's really no need to. I did say already that I have it under control. You'd just make a mess there.

LENA How about booze?

FATHER Nice try. Nonetheless, I keep that under lock and key, and, trust, me, I have a pretty good idea of what's there.

LENA I could do with a little ration.

FATHER Spirits will only be used for special events or saving lives. So let your taste go.

SIMA I'm going crazy. By now I keep dreaming about those cans. How long do we actually have to stay here? Do we really have to eat all the supplies?

MOTHER Come on, Simmie. Times are tough, diseases are raging out there; hunger, terrorists.

FATHER People even kill for a drop of water.

MOTHER Trust me, you don't want to be out there.

FATHER The army has to intervene to restore order and drive out the last Ahmed. Until then, we stay put. We are safe here and we have a well. We've already explained it.

SIMA But, Mum, what if it doesn't change? What if the world is never the same again?

Scene 6

Poll

1st MAN Let me tell you something. Many people may get upset with me now, but let's be honest, haven't our people sought asylum in other countries? After all, emigration has a tradition here. Our great-grandfathers went to America to feed their families. They fled from the war, from the Communists. Today, people are leaving for water. We should share. So why is it such an issue all of a sudden?

1st WOMAN A breakdown of society? And why is this happening? We should blame ourselves. Today there is water for rations, what if tomorrow there is no essential food. You won't be able to get bread or butter. Then you can keep asking why all this. Though it will be too late.

2nd WOMAN Sorry ... I'm so sorry ... we have to be able to survive a bit ... Mine, too, is such a difficult fate. But man is already so destined to suffer in this world. I'm just worried things are going to get worse.

Poverty is getting on to people. Poverty and disease. This is our punishment for being sinners.

Scene 7

SIMA Chapter 3. Life in the Bunker

Mother enters, trying to clean up somehow. Then she takes some pills from the hiding place. She counts them for a moment. Then she takes one from each medication. She sits on a makeshift plastic seat and rests briefly. She notices Simona's camera, turns on the recording. We see the recording on the monitors. Father arrives during the monologue. Behind Mother's back, he pulls out a bottle from a hiding place and takes a sip. He sits next to Mother who smiles insanely. Daughters arrive, sit by their parents. When the monologue is over, Sima turns off the camera and puts it back in place.

SIMA Hi, it's Sima again. My school project is taking a bit longer. Today is the thirty-ninth day of our life in the bunker. I mean, at least I guess it is the thirty-ninth. We are only guided by Dad's watch, because the batteries have run out on ours. During the day, we have lights turned on and turn them off at night. We take power from city lights. I don't know how, but Dad said it doesn't have to be possible forever, so we have a backup generator. Overall, everything here is refined to the smallest detail. Mum told me that it was my great-grandfather who built it during the Great War. Mum's grandfather expanded it during the Second World War and added more supplies. During Communism, they built two more rooms and dug up a well. They also fortified the ceiling, because they feared atomic bomb the Americans were

allegedly planning on dropping. The loo and shower are connected to the sewer, though it is said that some of the dated system is no longer in the city plans. In the year two thousand, when it was supposed to be the end of the world, my father put in air conditioning. And, in two thousand and twelve, when the end was certain, he and Mum replenished the stocks for another twenty or even more years. The best thing is that I didn't have a clue about this. I always wondered why the other kids went on holidays with their parents, while we never had the money, as something was always being built. Now I am grateful to them for this. Too bad there is no signal. We don't have the internet, mobile phones or TV, not even radio. Dad keeps coming up with themed evenings, so we play all kinds of games, hold competitions, or just sing. We can always play a movie on Thursdays, though mostly we end up arguing as everyone wants to watch something different. I think that, in addition to all the negatives, this separation from the outside world also has a positive aspect: it drew our family closer.

Scene 8

SIMA Chapter 4. Going wild or who kills most bugs?

FATHER Who kills most bugs?

LENA I'm playing. Mum?

MOTHER (*drugged*) I'm playing!

FATHER Simona?

SIMA Again?

LENA It'll be fun.

FATHER (*grabs an extension cord, intending to unplug it from the source*) I'll turn off the lights now. I'm going to count to ten. When I put the lights back on, you may start. Who kills most of them, wins. Reaaaaadyyyy ... Steady ... Count down.

Father disconnects the power supply; lights off.

FATHER Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five ...

ALL Four, three, two, one – now!

Light comes on.

MOTHER Gotchya!

LENA You may be quick, still, you can't get away from me!

FATHER I'm a spy, I've got three!

MOTHER You can't beat me, they have a nest in the armchair! They're all mine!

LENA Next one. Here you are, buggers, under the wardrobe.

SIMA Yuck, they're everywhere.

FATHER Stop hanging about and keep killing.

MOTHER Remember, (*bang*) each one you (*bang*) let live, will come to bite you at night.

FATHER I bet I win. There's no such thing, (*bang*) when one does things with gusto.
(*bang*)

LENA I shall kill ... I shall kill ... I shall kill ... I shall kill ...

MOTHER How I detest you ... DETEST!!!

FATHER Disgusting ... revolting ... bloody... malicious ... monsters.

MOTHER I'll teach you, blood suckers!

LENA Vermin, now, how do you like parasitising on us?

FATHER Come on, get out, I can't wait to see you!

LENA Ah, now I've smashed its leg! I hope that counts, too.

FATHER Not valid! Intestines must show. (*bang*) There we go!

MOTHER You mean the ugly green, those that something flows from?

LENA Mine are full of the sucked blood. I hope you don't mind the spots.

FATHER They will be a splendid keepsake of our triumph!

LENA Sima, if you don't want to join in, keep out of way at least.

SIMA Auch, stop pushing me. Look, you messed up my whole T-shirt with that crap.

FATHER No one will stay clean in this war. Not even the bystander.

MOTHER (*short of breath*) I don't think we'll get any more. They crawled away.

LENA Who won?

FATHER Me, obviously.

MOTHER Don't be ridiculous. All those cadavers are mine.

LENA And those are mine. How shall we count'em? They're a mash.

FATHER Draw?

LENA Nope, I won, definitely.

MOTHER How about one more round.

SIMA No.

FATHER Simmie isn't enjoying this.

LENA She always waits for someone else to do dirty job for her.

MOTHER Let her be.

LENA She should be a little involved in cleaning.

SIMA But I find it disgusting. Doing it you look so ...

FATHER So how? Just say it.

SIMA I don't know ... like a nightmare ... like you're insane.

LENA (*laughs*) We? Look at you. You've been bitten by bugs all night and still find it repulsive to kill them. After all, we have to defend ourselves somehow. Or do you want to be eaten alive one day?

FATHER Simona, it's not the time to play prima donna. Join the crowd and together we'll drive out those intruders.

LENA Or at least get out of the way while the others are doing the right thing.

SIMA And can't you do it differently?

FATHER How?

SIMA I don't know, somehow ... more humanely?

LENA Should we ask them to be so kind and commit suicide?

SIMA How about an insect repellent? Do you really have to put on this spiel?

LENA But then it wouldn't be so much fun. Dad, turn off the lights.

And now we'll count to fifty. Let as many gather as possible.

Light goes out. We follow the poll on the monitors.

Scene 9

Poll

2nd WOMAN People behave like fools. And not only the strangers, but also our own. As if they had been infected by them. Went wild. It's all in people. But the One above sees it, that's why he sent God's lashing upon us.

2nd MAN There is shortage of water already. Within a year, an area of primaeval forests larger the whole of Slovakia will be plundered. The seas are contaminated

with plastics. We breathe air that would have killed humanity a thousand years ago. I could go on forever ... Mankind is its own greatest enemy.

SIMA Chapter 5. Who is stealing the honey?

SIMA Lena ...

LENA What are you doing here? Go to bed.

SIMA But I can't.

LENA Why?

SIMA And why aren't you sleeping?

LENA I'm thinking.

SIMA What about?

LENA Everything.

SIMA Can I think along?

LENA No.

SIMA Why?

LENA Because I would have to think out loud.

SIMA You don't have to. (*playfully*) I'll connect to your consciousness and will be answering you telepathically.

LENA Answering what?

SIMA Your questions.

LENA What if I don't have any?

SIMA I don't believe that. We all have some. I have at least a thousand.

LENA So, write them up and you can use them in the evening quiz tomorrow.

SIMA I don't think there will be any. Have you noticed lately that one evening programme after another is being cancelled?

LENA I don't care.

SIMA Even when I asked Dad about it, he said I should watch a film. On Tuesday! See?

LENA So what? Did you put anything on?

SIMA No. I've seen it all at least ten times. I'm ever so bored. What do you think, how much longer are we to stay put?

LENA I don't know.

SIMA I first thought it would only be a matter of a few weeks, but it's been almost three years now. Three years, that's quite something.

LENA Two more and I'm off.

SIMA Why as late as two?

LENA That's the limitation period. Five years. Then they will no longer be able to convict me.

SIMA What for?

LENA Civil disobedience ...

SIMA You have committed civic disobedience many times before and never landed in jail.

LENA Now they will add a riot and an attack on a public official.

SIMA When did you manage that?

LENA The night we moved in the bunker. I poured water in a cop's face.

SIMA Did you?! That's five years in jail. So it's because of you that we've been here, after all.

LENA No, I just fast-tracked it.

SIMA Do you think it's really that bad outside?

LENA I guess so ... I don't know.

SIMA But how can you tell, given we're locked up here all the time?

LENA Let me show you something. Have a look. (*Lena pulls a pipe out of the wall.*)

SIMA Into the pipeline?

LENA The point is, it's not a mere pipe. Grandpa must've installed it here. I guess even Dad doesn't realise we've got it.

SIMA (*looks into the pipe*) Periscope! I can see our living room.

LENA Cool, isn't it?

SIMA Like in a submarine. Do you think Grandpa used to spy on us?

LENA Possibly. (*laughs*) Sometimes you get really weird ideas.

SIMA He got bored, crawled into the bunker and listened to us slander him.

LENA It's just for watching. No sound.

SIMA (*frightened*) Someone's up there.

LENA I know, I've been watching him for a week.

SIMA A stranger in our house. How did he get there?

LENA I suppose he's a squatter. He picked up an empty house and moved in just like that.

SIMA What are we going to do?

LENA We? What can we do?

SIMA What if he's sick? Can we get infected?

LENA I don't think so. This bunker is also radiation-proof.

SIMA And if he's a terrorist and blows us up?

LENA The bunker will shelter us.

SIMA Still, we should tell Dad.

LENA Why? He'd just make us recount the stocks, plus I'd lose this special entertainment.

SIMA Do you enjoy watching him?

LENA He's pretty handsome for an immigrant. I call him Ahmed.

SIMA (*laughs*) Father keeps calling them Ahmed ... I can only see his arse.

LENA Indeed.

SIMA I prefer looking people in the eye.

LENA Eyes are alright, too.

SIMA For God's sake, Lena, did you get a crash on him?

LENA Cut the crap. Well, what are you staring at? Didn't you have someone out there whom you liked?

SIMA Di Caprio in *The Beach*. But I got a poster, so I don't miss him. (*They laugh.*)

LENA Want some honey? (*Lena takes a jar of honey and a spoon from the hiding place.*)

SIMA Where do you get the honey from?

LENA From the storage. I always put aside a jar during the stocktake.

SIMA That's why the figures never match.

LENA Here's a spoon, have some.

SIMA You all keep stealing things here, I am the only one to have nothing, because I live by the rules. Father keeps sipping spirit, mother is always asleep because she's on pills and you're stealing honey.

LENA Stop whining and eat. How about licking honey with me and watching the stranger through the periscope?

SIMA Really? Are we going to be a team?

LENA We have always been.

SIMA Yummy, lovely ... You know, you're very pretty. If your immigrant saw you, he'd surely fall in love with you at first sight.

LENA (*playfully*) Simona, you sometimes come up with such nonsense that I'd rather ... tickle you to death.

SIMA (*through laughter*) Lena, no ... no ... stop it ... don't!

Scene 10

FATHER (*comes out from his quarters*) What are you doing here? You woke me. Go to bed.

LENA You aren't to tell me when to sleep.

SIMA Come, no point arguing with him.

LENA He wants to get pissed again.

FATHER (*pulling out a bottle from the well, the bottle is attached with a string; grumbling*) How do they treat me? Ungrateful monsters; man is saving their lives and they? (*He takes a mouthful from the bottle.*) But this is going to change. There will be a strict régime! I'll show you who the master is. (*drinks*)

Mother enters from the parents' quarters.

MOTHER Can't sleep either?

FATHER Argh, the little ones made me crossed. Cheeky monkeys.

MOTHER What did they do?

FATHER They talk back, no point explaining.

MOTHER Awful. We should relax. Did you get anything?

FATHER I did ... (*retrieves some pills from his pocket*) Today, they'll sell you a house for a glass of water. That well is a treasure.

MOTHER Let me have some. (*sitting on the floor, Father joins her*) How are things out there?

FATHER Worse than before. The natives have joined forces with the Africans. They began to share water, food. And, imagine, even women.

MOTHER Blacks with whites?! (*takes a pill*)

FATHER There is also one from a tribe in our house. And the ginger-haired girl who lives at the end of the street keeps coming to him. When I imagine my daughters mating like this ... I'd rather keep them locked up for the rest of my life.

MOTHER Someone lives in our house?

FATHER Don't eat them all. (*He takes the pill from his wife's palm, takes it and sips the spirit.*) They are scattered throughout the city. And move into empty houses.

MOTHER Doesn't the police do anything about it?

FATHER No. Because these houses are to be demolished.

MOTHER What?! (*takes another pill and a mouthful of the spirit*)

FATHER They will build high-rises instead so that the Niggers have a place to live.

MOTHER Dreadful. Do you think they'll knock down our house too?

FATHER Possibly ... Though, I don't care. If that's how it's supposed to be up there, I'd rather live in the bunker. Here at least I have life under control.

MOTHER But what about me? And the girls?

FATHER Have some more. You come up with different ideas.

Father takes out the medication from his pocket. Mother is choosing briefly, then opens one of the bottles and pours the pills into her mouth.

FATHER Slow down, don't eat it all at once. (*He takes her pills and also pours them into his mouth. Then he drains them with the spirit, passing some to Mother.*)

MOTHER Give me some more.

FATHER You'll get overdose.

MOTHER So?

They start laughing, have more drinks and then fall asleep.

Scene 11

SIMA Chapter 6. Yuck!

Sima and Lena arrive.

SIMA (*comes out with a camera, captures their parents, then herself. We see everything on the monitors.*) This is a message for all mankind: never, do you hear,

never, waste four years in a bunker with your parents and sister. It's insane!

Whatever's out there, can't be worse than here. If only I could escape.

LENA (*looks at their sleeping parents*) Yuck. (*peeks into the periscope*) No way!

SIMA What is it?

LENA Look.

SIMA (*turns off the camera, goes to take a look*) He's got someone there. A girl ... Pumps ... and red stockings. Too bad I can't see her face. Bend down, come-on, I want to see your face.

LENA Any idea who it is?

SIMA Who?

LENA That bitch from the end of the street. Who else would wear red stockings?

SIMA Which one?

LENA Don't you know? That ugly freckle-face.

SIMA That one?! How come our Ahmed likes her?

LENA Our? I am the one who found him, he's mine.

SIMA They spilled something ... Now she bent over. Yes, it's her. I guess she spilled wine.

LENA Like ... they keep drinking wine out there and we have to stick around?

SIMA Because we are locked here, and Dad is the only one to know the code.

LENA I've had enough!

Lena goes to Father. She shakes him.

LENA I want to go out, do you hear me? What's the numeric code?! Say it! Come on, say it.

FATHER Let me sleep, you monster. Won't tell you a thing.

Meanwhile, Sima goes to drink from the well.

SIMA Forget it. Leave him alone. Yuck, don't you find the water taste weirder by the day? I'm not feeling well. I better go to bed. Come on, Lena. This really makes no sense.

LENA I hate you, do you hear me? Hate! (*goes to the bunker door*) I'll figure it out ... Six digits ... What could it be? Dad's birthday ... (*trying to dial the code*)

SIMA (*looks into the periscope*) They're licking each other.

LENA Mum's birthday ...?

SIMA It makes me even sicker.

LENA Wedding anniversary ... What date was it, come-on, Sima, help me out!

SIMA Sometime in the summer. Now he grabbed her arse. She withdrew his hand.

Oh, Ahmed, if only you grabbed me like that, I'd let you.

LENA It was May, for sure! ... Or June? Could it have been the fifteenth? The fifteenth! I bet it was the fifteenth!

SIMA He grabbed her again. Of course, now she let him, bitch. She is difficult at first and now. It makes my head spin.

LENA So stop staring and help me.

SIMA Do you know how many combinations there can be? Had I paid attention in maths lessons, I'd be able to work it out for you. Come, let's sleep.

LENA Alright. I'll leave it for now. But I'll try again tomorrow. And I'll keep trying until I find the combination. (*Lena and Sima are leaving for their quarters.*)

SIMA Fine. Take a notebook so you can write down which digits you have already tried. So that you don't repeat the same.

LENA Good point!

FATHER (*wakes up drunk, talks to himself*) You'd like to know the digits, wouldn't you, babe? You know, you cheek, it was your birthday. See how I loved you? Neither the anniversary nor the birth of anyone else, not even mine. But that's over. You want random digits, so let them be random. (*goes to the door and spins the dial*) That's it, no one gets out now. (*giggles, stumbles back to Mother and falls asleep*)

Scene 12

Poll

2nd MAN Per capita water consumption in 2019 was one hundred litres a day. Today it is two litres of drinking water and four litres of utility water. Rationed, of course. And that is purportedly to be cut down further. We know there are also secret sources. There are people who haven't reported their wells. Though it is illegal, because groundwater has long been contaminated by plastic landfills. I think it is also the source of new, as yet, unknown diseases. Who knows what the water contains.

2nd WOMAN God's chastisement. Apocalypse. And this is only the beginning.

Scene 13

SIMA Chapter 7. Illness

The family has spots on their faces and arms.

MOTHER Bring some water from the well. We have to give her a wrap.

SIMA No, yuck, no water ...

FATHER She'll live. We've all had it. No need to panic.

MOTHER We must bring her fever down.

SIMA (*hallucinating*) Ahmed ... Ahmed ... (*sighs*)

MOTHER What is she saying? Ahmed?

LENA She is hallucinating. Perhaps she is afraid of the Africans.

FATHER That's good, because those cannibals are worse than death ... Can't you give her some medication?

MOTHER We're out of medication. I've given you all the supplies when you were sick.

LENA (*ironically*) Yeah, right.

FATHER (*brings a wet towel soaked in the well*)

MOTHER Come on, baby, you've got to fight. The poultice will help you ...

SIMA No! It's cold.

MOTHER Shh! It's alright. You'll see, it will make you feel better ...

SIMA No! No! Leave me ... Leave me ... Ahmed ...

LENA She needs help. Open the damn door.

SIMA Yes ... yes, we must open the door. Open the door.

FATHER Nonsense. I say she will make it. I went through it, Mum went through it, and so have you. And even if she doesn't make it, she would always be better off than living out there.

LENA You can't be serious?!

FATHER (*leaving*) I am.

MOTHER Where are you going?

FATHER Where can you go here? To bed.

MOTHER Not now. We need you here.

FATHER What for?

MOTHER What if she gets worse?

FATHER You'll manage.

MOTHER She might really need outside help.

FATHER She won't. She'll make it, she's tough. As tough as a rat. (*laughs*)

LENA What?

FATHER As I said already. No one is going anywhere. When she overcomes this, she will be more resilient.

LENA Like a rat?

FATHER Or a cockroach. They live down here too. They can survive even a nuclear attack. We will survive too. And when Simona recovers, we'll have a themed evening, as in the olden days. Everything will be fine again. We just mustn't let go of the discipline. But I shall take care of that. Everything will be alright again, perhaps even better.

SIMA Ahmed ... Ahmed ...

FATHER Don't worry, baby, I won't give you to an Ahmed.

Scene 14

Poll

1st MAN Let's be honest, wouldn't this whole planet be better off without us? After all, in that brief period of its existence, humanity managed to plunder, infest it with waste, destroy the air ... It would have been better if the dinosaurs remained here. This space experiment obviously didn't work out.

2nd MAN Humans allegedly differ from animals in that they can think. Use tools to work. They can laugh and transform emotions into art. That's why we should be on the top of food chain. We act like parasites instead.

Scene 15

SIMA Chapter 8. Evacuation.

FATHER Tamdadedam! And now the trick. Would you turn off the lights.

MOTHER (*She unplugs the power supply. The light goes off.*)

SIMA (*whispering*) Gosh, that's so embarrassing!

LENA (*laughs*)

FATHER I'll light a candle now. Watch what I can do with the flame.

MOTHER (*enthusiastically*) The flame travels. (*applause*) Come on, girls. (*The daughters applaud reluctantly.*) How about some excitement. Dad's trying so hard.

SIMA (*fed-up*) Fab! (*applause*)

LENA (*fed-up*) Incredible, really. Can we turn it back on now?

SIMA Better not. My spots don't show in the dark.

MOTHER Stop it. We all got them. That's because of the disease. Yet, we survived.

FATHER Lena, turn on the light. I thought my performance would make you happier.

MOTHER Dad tried so hard. He rehearsed all afternoon.

LENA I would be happier if he works out the code.

FATHER What numbers would that be?

LENA You know them.

SIMA Drop it, Lena. There's no point. He has long forgotten. We are sentenced to death here.

FATHER What's the nonsense?! What death? The end is out there. This is our hope for life.

LENA How about we decide ourselves?

FATHER You two, right?

LENA After all, we are adults.

FATHER Do you want to leave?! Serve yourself. Go. You'll go straight in jail. Have you forgotten how you poured the water over the cop? He certainly hasn't.

LENA It was long ago. It's past the limitation period.

FATHER Such deeds are never subject to limitation.

SIMA What about me? I didn't harm anyone.

FATHER That's right. I just wanted to protect you. Though ... I don't know whether it is the water or the old tins ... Simply, the disease changed us all. Alas, it affected you the most.

MOTHER What are you telling her?! You mustn't.

FATHER Perhaps it happened because we ran out of the medication. Though, your face, your hands ... do you really think the world out there is ready for that?

SIMA You said it would go. I can't be like this forever! It's not fair.

LENA That was too much, Dad!

FATHER I'm just trying to keep my family together.

MOTHER Sometimes I hate you so! *(She goes to the bedroom. Father follows her.)*

FATHER Hold on, what do you mean?!

Scene 16

Sima approaches the periscope, peeks in a moment or two.

SIMA Do I really look that awful?

LENA So what? Does it matter?

SIMA Are you still looking to see if he came back?

LENA It's been two months. Ahmed is gone.

SIMA Do you know I was in love with him?

LENA *(sarcastically)* Really? And that you kept it secret so well. *(imitates her sister)*
Ahmed ... Ahmed ... my love.

SIMA What? Was I talking from sleep?

LENA When you were ill, you kept hallucinating about him.

SIMA Really? What about Mum and Dad?

LENA They were saving your life, silly. They didn't care about the nonsense you were saying.

SIMA I also wrote him a poem. Should I tell you?

LENA No.

SIMA Don't you want to know? It's encrypted.

LENA You mean full of metaphors?

SIMA No. Really encrypted.

LENA Go ahead.

SIMA I must warn you – it's a short one.

LENA Even better.

SIMA Actually, it's just four verses.

LENA It's not a poem then.

SIMA It is. It's a poem in the style of the oldest Chinese Ts-Tching collection of poems. Specifically, the first part Kuo-ju.

LENA Now you're making it up.

SIMA No. Really, it's true. The collection inspired me.

LENA Where do you get the nonsense from?

SIMA From books. (*points to encyclopaedias*)

LENA You really must be desperate when you read that. It's full of encyclopaedias.

SIMA Listen carefully. I am keen to know what you'll say. (*She finds her notebook among the books, she reads.*)

GNOL I DEARB ROF EKIL

ESOLC OS

UOY ROF GNOL I

DENOSIRPMI TEY

UOY MORF RAF OS

Well, what do you say?

LENA You should set it to music.

SIMA I also thought of that. Though, by the time I managed to compose it, I was over being in love. So there is no amazing GNOL GNOL song.

LENA (*mockingly*) Perhaps next time. Such witty lyrics would certainly deserve that.

SIMA You think it's rubbish, don't you?

LENA Definitely not in terms of content.

SIMA You don't t even know what it's about.

LENA Show me the notebook. (*reading*) Like for bread I long, I long for you
So close, yet imprisoned, so far from you. Awful. (*approaches the periscope*)

SIMA How did you work it out? I thought I was brilliant.

LENA It used to be a kindergarten code. Written backwards. You could've put in more effort ... Something's going on up there.

SIMA A new arrival? Is he handsome? What's his arse like?

LENA Enormous, it's an excavator. Dad! Dad! Come, quick!

FATHER (*dashes out of the bedroom, Mother follows him*) What's going on?

LENA (*points to the periscope*) Look!

Scene 17

FATHER (*peeks into the pipe*) What is it? Periscope? Why didn't you tell me about it?

LENA Does it matter now? See what they're doing there?

FATHER I guess they're tearing down our house.

MOTHER Can they do that?

LENA Then forbid them.

SIMA What are we going to do?

FATHER Just don't panic. I have already told you that this bunker will resist a nuclear attack.

SIMA Right, though it couldn't be tested so far.

LENA We should leave this place.

FATHER Don't you start again.

SIMA But they'll tear it all down!

FATHER So, they will. And then they will build something new again. It won't affect us in any way. (*Mother shrieks.*) What happened?

MOTHER There ... (*points to one of the pipes*) There's a rat in the air conditioning.

SIMA Mum, there are rats everywhere. You could have gotten used to them in all those years. They should taste better, otherwise they're harmless.

MOTHER But this one's dead. And it fell from above.

FATHER Nonsense. It couldn't fall through. All this is protected by a steel-concrete structure.

MOTHER I saw what I saw.

LENA Perhaps it just climbed up there and died of old age.

SIMA So what if it fell from above? Does it matter?

LENA Are you nuts? It would mean that the lauded steel-concrete construction is getting lose.

FATHER It is not. It holds as it ought to. Mum merely had a vision.

Screeching noise, sound of a falling building.

MOTHER Is this my vision, too?

LENA It's really falling apart. We've got to get out. (*Everyone but Father rushes to the door.*)

SIMA Yes, let's go! We must open the armoured door. Else we end up buried here.

MOTHER This is the end.

SIMA Come on, Dad, move, only you know the code.

LENA Dad, don't just stand there, come-on!

SIMA Mum! Dad?

FATHER That door can't be opened. I tried before.

LENA How come? Just dial the right combination.

FATHER Except I don't know the code.

Sound: rocks falling, screeching noise.

SIMA You forgot? Lena was right.

LENA No matter. Never mind. You just have to concentrate. It's definitely some combination you know. Close your eyes and try to remember.

FATHER No point.

SIMA Dad, try! I don't want to die yet.

FATHER When I was closing the door, the code was the last digits of your birthday.

SIMA See, you remembered. Lena, open the damn door.

LENA I've already tried that. You locked us in here and the door was broken? How could you?

FATHER It worked perfectly. For three years I used the door once a week to get out.

LENA What?!

FATHER I had to. We needed medication, vitamins. I had to replenish the stocks. And check the situation up there.

LENA Why couldn't I go?

FATHER Because they would put you in jail. Besides, it's really dangerous up there. Especially for women.

LENA Everything is better than this!

SIMA Dad, why can't you open the door?

FATHER I took some pills, had a drop to drink ... more than I should have ... The damn door won't open since.

LENA Gosh, you changed the code when pissed?!

MOTHER Come on, Lena, don't talk like that to your Dad.

LENA And how am I to talk to him? After all, it is because of him that we will all die here.

SIMA Mum, did you know?

MOTHER Well ... yes.

SIMA Why didn't you say a word?

MOTHER And what would have you done? You'd only be more miserable.

Sound: falling gravel, screeching.

LENA There must be a way. There must be a way out.

SIMA Hey, I know! If that rat got here ...

LENA Airconditioning!

FATHER It's too narrow. We can't get through.

LENA Sima, help me get up there, then I pull you up.

FATHER It can bury us.

LENA (*climbs into the pipe*) Do you have ... a better ... solution? Sima, your turn.

MOTHER You're right. At least we have to try. If we stay here, it will be our end.

FATHER You have no idea what's awaiting you up there.

SIMA (*from the pipe*) What would ... await us? People like us. Come on, Mum.

MOTHER (*climbs*) It can't be worse ... than here ... I'm here! ... What about you, dear? Are you coming? (*Father is sitting on the floor. He just shakes his head in disapproval.*)

Scene 18

Poll

2nd WOMAN They're not from here. The Africans are, but they ... I'm sorry, I'm so sorry for them. They abducted them, just like me ... well, those antichrists down there ... Satan and his companions. I, too, have been through hell. I know what I'm talking

about. They caught a few people and a few aliens. I saw them there. They boiled them in cauldrons, that's why they have the spots.

These are burns. Now you know everything. You can tell the others: they are aliens who have gone through hell with us. But they won't hurt us.

1st WOMAN They should take them back. Under the ground. Don't we have enough of our own problems? We are already coming to terms with the migrants here anyway. We try to live together somehow. Though they are different. They look different. We live above the ground, they live below the ground. Why did they dig them up? Now they will want our water.

2nd MAN I really don't see a problem with them. If the DNA shows that they are still humans, then it is possible that the rational man was succeeded by the underground man. It is then up to scientists to investigate whether this is an evolutionary leap in our developmental chain, or whether the underground man was here long before us. How many of them live down there will certainly be subject to research. There might soon be another migration wave, though this time from near the core of the Earth. True, only they can answer these questions. As far as we know, they are now solely in the hands of doctors and researchers. And everything around them is kept secret.

Scene 19

SIMA Chapter 9. Are we humans at all?

We see the entire family on the monitors. They are isolated, dressed in hospital gowns, sitting huddled together. We see the image from one place, interrupted by something, blurred, as if it were being recorded on a CCTV camera. We hear Simona's monologue in the speakers.

SIMA Hi ... I'm alive. It's a miracle. No one ate or raped me. The journey up was dreadful. First, we had to crawl through a pile of rock and sand. We almost suffocated. Once we were nearly up there, we got swamped by water from a pipe of another well. We pulled Mum out at the last instant. Dad didn't come with us. He said he would rather die than live in the world of African savages and share water with them. So we left him there. In the end, he was rescued by construction workers who

dug their way to him. Paradoxically, those savages were among them. Yet, when we thought the worst was over, they put us into ambulance cars and isolated us in this special lab. Now they have no idea what to do with us. They keep taking all kinds of samples from us, they study our behaviour. And they do all this just because they want to see whether we really are humans. The water in our well must have been contaminated with something. The disease we had not only changed the colour of our skin, but probably our DNA as well. Even we no longer know who we are. My father keeps shouting that he doesn't belong in this world, what only makes the situation worse. Mum withdrew into her own world, and Lena is like an unexploded volcano again. That's why they study her the most. They are keen to know how far we can integrate into a society that doesn't want our integration at all. Some think we are from another planet. We keep trying to explain to them that the Earth is also our home, but to no avail. They don't want us here. There are also those who want us to go back where we came from, to the underground. Though that's impossible, as our bunker was demolished by a huge excavator. We don't belong anywhere, and no one cares that all we really want is what everyone is entitled to: to live in peace and harmony

The End