

Slovak Radio Bratislava

Rádio Devín

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Steam

The title of the play in Slovak, 'Para', is a play on the Slovak word for steam, 'para', and the Greek prefix, 'para' which is used to indicate strange, perverse, or abnormal phenomena. Five characters – the indistinct HATTY, the fearful BABS, the controlling CHARLIE, the beloved DERMOT and the over-looked but at the same time dangerous DICK – change names according to the situations in which they find themselves. The action takes place in a spa complex which the characters visit in order to hide from their partners, but, above all, in order to hide from themselves. In this artificial world of steam and echoes, staff and customers come together, as well as landlords and tenants, the naked and the clothed, spouses and lovers, those who abandon and those who love. Cleansing steam-baths, spa-treatments, massages and conversations are replaced by banal, random violence. No-one is safe. Maybe these chance witnesses of their own lives will find out what has happened from the evening news. And that's why you should never ask for whom the mobile tolls.... It might be yours.

- 2003 -

Dramatis personae:

BABS – 25

DERMOT – 25-30

HATTY – 40

CHARLIE – 40-45

DICK – 25-40

Music

The Pool

DICK So? Just resting? Relaxing?

HATTY You don't have anything to read, do you? Just as long as it's not about love, or life, or death, or anything at all?

DICK What do you want to read here for?

HATTY Just to relax. Or are you called 'Chill Out' now? Has somebody bought you up again?

DICK Can't you just do nothing?

HATTY Yogis spend their whole lives learning to do that.

DICK I don't need to be a Yogi.

HATTY There's no danger of that.

DICK I don't believe in them. Are you a Yogi?

HATTY It's good... for relaxation.

DICK You just put up your feet and there you are.

DICK Baby, where are we off to?

BABS Nobody was at the desk.

DICK Well, if I'm here, I can't be there, can I?

BABS I was just wondering if the place is properly open today. ...

DICK Can't you see?

BABS Just tell it to me straight. Do you work here or not?

DICK Don't you worry about me. Take a look around you, Booby, and then you can boss people about! O.K, but I get 400 crowns. On the left of the entrance are the changing rooms; then you've got the showers and the sauna; the bar's closed. And don't wander about here in your shoes.

BABS Excuse me!

DICK You think you're smart, don't you? That mobile...

BABS What about it?

DICK Switch it off.

BABS Why all this familiarity all of a sudden? Do I look like I'm fifteen? Thank you for the compliment...

DICK Here we're all relaxed.

BABS Relax yourself, first of all.

DICK You can't speak to me like that round here.

BABS I haven't made a squeak yet, so chill, OK? Do I get a nice robe like that? And the rest of the stuff?

DICK I'll go and get you your stuff. Wait here.

Sound *steps in clogs.*

BABS A right Charlie.

HATTY Don't you worry about Dick. He'll be fine in a moment.

BABS He swans about in those clogs as if the whole place belongs to him.

HATTY Well it probably does.

BABS You seem to know your way about here.

HATTY I'm part of the furniture.

BABS And don't Dicks like that get on your nerves?

HATTY Where-ever you go, they're Dicks there.

BABS To think that I pay him for the privilege!

HATTY He doesn't make his money from this sauna, don't you worry.

BABS The worst ones are the ones who wander about in shorts and you can see their hairy calves.

HATTY You can tell everything about a man from his legs.

BABS Well even I could tell his fortune from the hairs on his legs.

HATTY He's simple enough to work out, he is.

BABS That robe suits you.

HATTY I'm an off-the-peg sort of person. Absolutely average.

BABS That must be convenient.

HATTY Average height, average looks, average brain.

BABS Do you wish you were on the beach?

HATTY Why?

BABS Or is it the light in here?

HATTY People are always wearing some sort of glasses, even if they don't realize it... And the darker they are, the safer it is.

Sound Clogs.

DICK There you go, Boob, towel, robe, and when you're finished, chuck it all in that basket. Today, babes, we'll be closing a little bit early. So don't get too comfortable... Will you be wanting a massage?

BABS What, from you?

HATTY Go on; the first ten minutes are included in the price.

BABS Well... I'm not sure.

DICK Well just let me know when... OK?

MUSIC

THE CHANGING ROOM

DERMOT (answer machine) If you must leave me a message, then go ahead.

BABS (under her breath) Hi. Where are you?... Oh, don't worry. Right now I'm in the Relax Centre, or Chill Out Centre, or something idiotic like that. It probably doesn't matter... OK, see you.

SOUND After a pause, a short beep. A mobile phone dialling. Ringing. The same voice on the answer machine.

BABS Yes!

DERMOT (answer machine) If you must leave me a message, then go ahead.

BABS Shit!

MUSIC

THE SAUNA

BABS Uff...

HATTY Just like being in a sauna, hey?

BABS Yes... It's great that there's nobody else here today.

HATTY What normal person would be here today?

BABS Aren't you normal?

HATTY No, I'm having therapy here: anti-shock therapy.

BABS What sort of shock?

HATTY Just regular shock, life-shock. Time for a change – that's what an optimist would say. But I'm such a boob that I probably shan't be leaving.

BABS Where would you be going?

HATTY For the moment I'm only certain about where I'm coming from

BABS Do think we could hear a mobile ringing in here?

HATTY Definitely not.

BABS Isn't this your ring-tone? (imitates a ring-tone)

HATTY What? Like this? (imitates the ring-tone.)

BABS Like this. (imitates another ring-tone)

HATTY My phone might sound something like that.

BABS Something like that? Don't you know for certain?

HATTY All these ring-tones sound the same to me.

BABS Personalize it.

HATTY You mean I should install my own ring-tone?

BABS For example.

HATTY I'd have to get one first.

BABS Just a moment ago something rang in the changing-room

HATTY That's nothing. I never answer my mobile

BABS What have you got it for, then?

HATTY My husband always buys me one. I only carry it about just to be able to know... where I'm being missed if I'm not somewhere...

BABS What if that's nowhere?

HATTY That's just a risk you've got to take.

BABS Can't you hear ringing? I'm just about melting in here.

HATTY You didn't last long.

MUSIC

THE CORRIDOR

CHARLIE Whoops! You're slipping about like a cat on ice. Buy yourself some flip-flops so you don't slide about the place.

BABS Thanks for the advice.

AKO At your service, Boob.

BABS Boob?

CHARLIE You're somebody's boob, aren't you?

BABS Did Dick let you in just like that?

CHARLIE That Dick who was cleaning his revolver?

BABS Today's for women only.

CHARLIE I like helping women.

BABS Well, you don't have to help me... So....

CHARLIE I bet you didn't let your Mummy feed you. "Me, me. I'll do it?" Maybe you just haven't found the right sort of male assistance

BABS You're wife... or whoever.... doesn't she fall over enough for you?

CHARLIE My wife has fallen off her trolley once and for all. She skipped puberty and now it's come back to her. Does that mean anything to you?

BABS I haven't finished puberty yet, so I wouldn't know...

CHARLIE She's always cold. In a while she'll be warm again.

BABS Have you got your heating on properly at home?

CHARLIE She's always mucking about with the heating ... She thinks that it's possible to be warm at home... How about you, where do you live? Have you got your own flat?

BABS Do work for a market-research company?

CHARLIE That's right... I could get you a flat if you want.

BABS Isn't that a phone ringing?

CHARLIE What?

BABS Are you an estate agent? Or what?

CHARLIE What...

BABS Yes...

CHARLIE My Fatty hasn't been here, has she? A drab blonde.

BABS There's one interesting blonde here...

CHARLIE And you, what do you do here?

BABS What do you reckon?

CHARLIE I can understand why she's like that. She's totally cracked... But you? Young and pretty. Don't you have anywhere else to be on a day like this?

BABS No. For the time being I don't have a house, or a car, or a country cottage, not even my own flat.

CHARLIE Well, I'm sorry, Boob.

BABS If only you knew how sorry I am sometimes!

CHARLIE Why don't you just buy all those things?

BABS I haven't got a Charlie like you.

CHARLIE So get married!

BABS Are you available?

CHARLIE That's the right approach. My wife's got everything.

BABS But she's not getting divorced...

CHARLIE At least not as far as I know. Why would she want to divorce me?

BABS Maybe you're a Dick.

CHARLIE You were saying... where is she?

BABS In the sauna.

CHARLIE Let her steam for a while. She's beginning to get a bit fat. She knows that I can't stand fat people. I can never understand how chubby people can be so popular.

BABS Shush...

CHARLIE Why should I shush? Fat people disgust me, and what's so wrong about that?

SOUND approaching footsteps in sandals.

BABS You're a right Charlie.

DICK What are you doing here?

CHARLIE I'm waiting for my wife.

DICK Wait somewhere else then. Are you ready, Babsy? Can we go massage?

BABS Fine... Let's get it over with...

CHARLIE Tell her that I'm waiting in the bar.

MUSIC

THE MIRROR

HATTY Why are you looking at me like that?

DERMOT Why do you want make-up on in the sauna?

HATTY A woman of my age without make-up can be quite scary.

DERMOT What Charlie are you making yourself up for?

HATTY How do you know that it's for some Charlie.

DERMOT Because in that respect we're all Charlies... I'm looking for a girl.

HATTY Are you her boyfriend?

DERMOT Babs's?
HATTY She's called Babs?
DERMOT That's what I called her
HATTY I think she's desperately waiting for you.
DERMOT That's just the problem.
HATTY Dermot dear, she must be somewhere here; she just left the sauna.
Are you her Dermot dear, or not?
DERMOT And what's your name?
HATTY Hatty?
DERMOT Is that a question or an answer?
HATTY Everybody calls me something different. Habby, Hatty, Haddy,
Hanny, Tatty, Fatty, Patty?
DERMOT I'm asking you what your name is not what you're called.
HATTY Oh, so we're best friends now? Fine, in that case, my name's
Amoeba.
DERMOT Chameleon?
HATTY Yes, whatever you call me,. I'll answer to.
DERMOT I still don't get it.
HATTY You look good... in that coat – and barefoot.
DERMOT What? I didn't want to get my socks wet.
HATTY Wait a moment... Roll your trousers up. You've got nice hairy
legs.
DERMOT Sorry? Tell Babs, that...
HATTY ...you're leaving her?
DERMOT ...I'm waiting in the bar.

MUSIC

THE MESSAGE COUCH

DICK Turn your head to the side... You won't need that here... What's the matter?

BABS Oh, my God...

DICK I don't have any problems with naked buns like yours.

BABS Am I as doughy as all that?

DICK I know good dough when I see it.

BABS Ow.

DICK What's up, Booby? I'm just kneading you a little bit. You tell your...

BABS Ooww... that neck's mine.

DICK Don't you worry, I've got a diploma.

BABS What good's that going to do me when I'm stuck in a wheelchair?

DICK Not everybody, Babs, has got a diploma like mine.

BABS Whose neck did you wring to get that?

DICK Come back here again, and you'll see. Maybe today you'll feel a bit bruised, but tomorrow you'll be as fit as a fish.

BABS ...dumbly staring at the world, hey?

DICK Have you got a sense of humour?

BABS I seem to have lost it all of a sudden.

DICK I like telling jokes.

BABS For God's sake. That hurts.

DICK Are you a blonde?

BABS No.

DICK It's not a dye-job, is it?

BABS Are you going to tell me jokes about blondes?

DICK But you're not a Jew?

BABS If I were, would the massage be cheaper or more expensive?

DICK Or a feminist?

BABS Ooww.

DICK Are you a feminist?
BABS ...in my spare time. What else do you want to know, now you've got your hands around my neck...
DICK Tatty's funny, isn't she?
BABS Who?
DICK Tatty. That... eye-candy. She isn't eighteen anymore, but she's well preserved. You're really stiff.
BABS When I was little, I swallowed a ruler.
DICK Really, aha... That was a joke wasn't it? Let me tell you a joke... Turn over. When did you last have a good shag?
BABS Sorry?
DICK Turn over. Onto your back. I'll massage your legs. Where are you going? We haven't finished yet.
BABS I have.
DICK Titty, that was joke... You've got a high opinion of yourself.

MUSIC

THE BAR

CHARLIE Is anyone serving here?
SOUND Doors opening. Several male voices.
CHARLIE Ah... Excuse me.... yes...
Sound Doors closing. Soft footsteps.
DERMOT An orange juice, please.
CHARLIE I didn't hear you coming.
DERMOT I'm barefoot. An orange juice, please.
CHARLIE I don't work here.
DERMOT Well, who are you?
CHARLIE A customer just like you, Dearie.
DERMOT Dearie?

CHARLIE You're someone's Dearie, aren't you? Or is it Dear?

DERMOT And you are definitely somebody's Charlie. Can't you bring me something to drink?

CHARLIE I tell you, nobody's serving here. Do I really look like some sort of Dick who serves beer?

DERMOT Well where are the real Dicks, then?

CHARLIE I wouldn't you advise to call them here right now.

DERMOT Are they playing cards or Russian roulette?

CHARLIE I don't quite get the rules, but they've got big piles of money

DERMOT As long as it's not my money...

CHARLIE It looks like they're having a good time... They've got everything charged up, their mobiles, and their... revolvers. Is that four-wheel drive outside yours?

DERMOT Sadly not...

CHARLIE Those ones can really fly.

DERMOT I prefer flying without a car.

CHARLIE Do you come here often?

DERMOT Are you having a good time?

CHARLIE It's just that I haven't seen you here before.

DERMOT That's because it's the first time I've been here.

CHARLIE Why is this the first time you've been here?

DERMOT Because I haven't been here before.

CHARLIE Why are you here today?

DERMOT Have you got a problem with me?

SOUND The beep of a text message.

CHARLIE Somebody loves you.

DERMOT That's the way it is sometimes.

CHARLIE Aren't you going to look to see who?

DERMOT I know anyway.

CHARLIE How can you be so sure?

DERMOT There are only two options.

CHARLIE She loves me – she loves me not?

DERMOT They both love me.

CHARLIE Well... in that case we're all jealous of you. Are you waiting for that pretty, young girl. Are you going to dump her, or is she going to dump you?

DERMOT What's that to do with you?

CHARLIE I'm interested. So are you leaving your Booby?

DERMOT Booby?

CHARLIE Who else can one leave if not Booby.

DERMOT I called her Babs.

CHARLIE And you think that you can do that? Leave someone? I've been leaving my wife ever since we got married, and that's fifteen years ago

DERMOT Is your wife the blonde?

CHARLIE The rather plain Fatty. At last...

CHARLIE Hello, you've got customers!

DICK We're closed.

CHARLIE Well, if you give me something to drink, you'll be open again

DICK Don't be such a smart-ass, OK?

CHARLIE Compared with you we're all geniuses

DICK You know what? Get lost. You've got no business being here today.

SOUND furniture being scraped...

DERMOT OK, OK, we've got the point. Calm down, OK? We'll just wait for the women and in a minute we'll be off. OK? It's all alright...

DICK But the sooner the better, because in a minute we're closing.

SOUND *clogs leaving*

CHARLIE Are you just as good with women and children?

DERMOT That's the way it is sometimes.

CHARLIE And what do you do apart from getting everybody to love you?

DERMOT I distribute teddy bears

CHARLIE Really? That's good... What sort?

DERMOT Fluffy little teddies.

CHARLIE And then you're surprised that everybody loves you.

DERMOT I'm not surprised.

CHARLIE You're a bigger Charlie than I am ... Is it well paid?

DERMOT Being loved?

CHARLIE The bears.

DERMOT I don't need wealth...

CHARLIE Of course... When you stop enjoying it, you'll move in with a woman who has everything.

DERMOT I'm getting an allergic reaction.

CHARLIE To me? Why? I'm just asking... You said that you go flying? How, exactly?

DERMOT On a parachute.

CHARLIE Where the wind blows you?

DERMOT Exactly.

CHARLIE A paraglider? Or a fly-by-night?

DERMOT Why are you asking if you know the answers already?

CHARLIE Do you know what 'para' means?

DERMOT I know a few paranormal Charlies, why?

CHARLIE Everything that begins with 'para' is different, perverse, abnormal.

DERMOT Are you calling me a pervert?

CHARLIE I'm just interested that 'para' as a prefix can mean beside, with and at the same time against and beyond. Do you know what I mean?

DERMOT I don't get it.

MUSIC

THE RELAXATION ROOM

BABS Has someone arrived?

HATTY My husband.

BABS Aha.

HATTY I can always hear him, arguing with someone. He's always making a scene like a right Charlie. In every shop and every restaurant. That man is capable of spoiling absolutely everything for me. Before I married him, I was generally a happy young girl...

BABS I can't just lie here like this.

HATTY One has to practice being lazy. Look at me... I just lie here and nothing bothers me.

BABS I don't have the time to wait.

HATTY Where are you hurrying off to? Bad news'll find you just the same.

BABS Isn't someone's phone ringing?

HATTY Forget it, Boobs! That's not the way to behave. If somebody wants to pick you up or leave you, let them make the running and do it in person. If you're going to be stupid like that, just switch it off. No news is good news. No virtual blokes, no expectations... No having, no touching, no possessions, no ties ...

BABS Is that a new religion?

HATTY A basic philosophy of life. People should go on walks, appreciate flowers, and keep to a good diet.

BABS What sort of diagnosis does that work for?

HATTY Chronically untreated unhappiness? What do I know...

BABS I'm an acute case.

HATTY Do you know what I would give not to have anybody?... Your mobile-telephonist is here already. He's waiting for you in the bar. Dermot dear, the darling.

BABS Why didn't you tell me before?

HATTY You've got time. Your whole life. Do your hair, put on some makeup. At least have a bit of style about it.

MUSIC

THE FOYER

DERMOT You rang me.

BABS About a thousand times.

DERMOT Yes...

BABS You're lucky that you've finally found me. Are you leaving me?

DERMOT It was great. Really.

BABS Couldn't you face sleeping with me again? Where do you have to go in such a dreadful hurry?

DERMOT I wanted to do it as soon as possible.

BABS Before what?

DERMOT I don't want you to think about it right now

BABS There isn't anything to think about...

DERMOT Because it doesn't matter.

BABS Right. And who doesn't it matter to?

DERMOT It's a complex.

BABS My complex?

DERMOT A complex of various things. People aren't made of Lego.

BABS Have I got a problem?

DERMOT What can I say without hurting you?

BABS I didn't expect anything from you... just that you existed.

DERMOT That's just it. You don't give a man a chance.

BABS What sort of chance did you want? Was I meant to make you a baby-father? Or what?

DERMOT You know that I'm still just a little Dickie. I need people to love me

BABS I loved you!

DERMOT Wasn't I loving to you?

BABS Well? So what? Didn't we have what we needed?

DERMOT Sometimes we want things that don't need.

BABS Are you dumping me?

DERMOT Baby...

BABS How can you just fly off like this?

DERMOT How else should I do it?

BABS Aren't you just a little bit sorry?

PATO I can't have everything. After all, what is everything?

BABS You don't know what everything is?

DERMOT Everything is relative. It depends how you look at it.

BABS You Charlie.

DERMOT Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder.

BABS I love you.

DERMOT Love also is in the eyes of the beholder.

BABS You're a right Dick. Haven't we got enough bears at home?

DERMOT Why don't I have a right to pleasant relationships. I wanted us to split up and be chilled about it.

BABS Well, we're splitting up in the Chill Out Centre

DERMOT It's called the Relax Centre.

BABS Why does it have to be like this? Were sitting here on this bench like a couple of Charlies...

DERMOT You came here.

BABS I'm terribly hungry. Can't we go and get something to eat together?

DERMOT They don't serve food here.

BABS Well let's go somewhere else.

DERMOT Look, I haven't got the time, Baby. I was just waiting for you to come.

BABS Sorry to have kept you!

DERMOT Why are you hurting me?

BABS I'm hurting you? I'd rather not be talking to you at all... But who else am I meant to say it to? Who else is interested, apart from the two of us!

DERMOT Baby, Baby! Calm down. Babbly, Booby, Boobsy... Shall I take you home?

BABS Leave me be.. I have to cool down here a bit. If I go outside now, something'll happen to me.

DERMOT Are you hot or cold? Come on, I'll take you back, and I'll wrap you up in a blanket. Press yourself against me. Harder. Is that warmer? I'll wrap you all up so that not even your nose shows. Babby, Babbies. How are you? Better? Can you feel me? Is that good? Are you lying down?... I'm just going.

MUSIC

THE STAIRS

DICK Don't kill yourself!

CHARLIE Who are you speaking to like that, you Dick! What sort of Charlie designed this place.

DICK You understand these things, do you? Are you an architect?

CHARLIE You're not one either. These steps shouldn't be here.

DICK You're a smart one!

CHARLIE Anybody can see that.

DICK You know what? I've told you once. Take your squeaky shoes and wait outside. Do you hear me?

CHARLIE Fine... No problem, I was just thinking ...

DICK Out!

CHARLIE ... that it would be better without these steps...

DICK Get lost, OK?

CHARLIE My wife's there.

DICK Wait for her outside. Patty'll be there in a minute.

CHARLIE It's cold outside.

SOUND approaching steps.

HATTY What's going on here? I'd rather you left my husband alive.

DICK We're closing in a minute, OK?

SOUND clogs leaving.

HATTY Do you have to argue with everyone. Are you right in the head? And with a Charlie like that?

CHARLIE But that's Dick.

HATTY Well he's got a loaded revolver stuck into his belt somewhere. Not everybody in the world is yours to boss about. You should work out how many people you've got on your side, and act accordingly.

CHARLIE Is that the way you want to talk?

HATTY Can't you just stay at home on your own

CHARLIE Patty, is that you?

HATTY At least somewhere people love me...

CHARLIE Have I done something again? I'll take you home.

HATTY You don't have to look after me. I'm not drunk.

CHARLIE You had your licence taken away.

HATTY So? What do you think's going to happen? Something terrible?
I'll take a cab.

CHARLIE A taxi right out of the city! You must be feeling rich.

HATTY I didn't want to live in a field!

CHARLIE You've never said anything before about where we live.

HATTY How was I to know how I'd feel there?

CHARLIE Normal people can guess how they'll react to things.

HATTY And the whole day I've been talking to certified lunatics.

CHARLIE You're crazy! All of a sudden you start dragging home all sorts of estate agents! If I hadn't picked up the phone by accident, I wouldn't even know that they've found us a replacement flat. Can you tell me why at least?

HATTY There's a dog that barks.

CHARLIE So we're going to complain every time some rabid dog starts barking?

HATTY That's right. I've got a phobia. A phobia of the field, of the village, of dogs and of you. Phobias have nothing to do with logic.

CHARLIE It's easy to solve problems, but we're dealing with feelings.

HATTY Including yours.

CHARLIE Do we have to solve this right here and now?

HATTY You came to find me here

CHARLIE You're never at home...
I was calling you all day. Why do you have a mobile if you never hear it?

HATTY I can't be available all the time.

CHARLIE That's right, you're often in a plane, a helicopter... on a parachute.
Don't you want to talk to me anymore?

HATTY I talk to you all the time

CHARLIE That's news to me

HATTY I'm in eternal inner dialogue with you

CHARLIE You're an island all for yourself

HATTY No. I'm an archipelago

CHARLIE Can't you be a little more rational?!

HATTY How can I be rational when I'm arguing?

CHARLIE You look so rough. You've got cream on your face that you haven't rubbed in properly.

HATTY Do you always have to tell me what I look like? Why don't you just go away for once?

CHARLIE I'll wait for you in the car.

HATTY Now you've gone and done it. You always get me worked up like this. I've been relaxing here all afternoon for nothing. Are you happy now? I'll get dressed and I'm coming. In my own time.

MUSIC

THE CHANGING ROOM

HATTY Well? Did you find your Boobs?

DERMOT I took her back to the relaxation room.

HATTY You dropped her off there... as if at the dry-cleaners? And are you going to go back for her?

DERMOT She has to relax for a moment..

HATTY Are you leaving now?

DERMOT You are too, aren't you?

HATTY I'm being picked up.

DERMOT Someone's doing nicely!

HATTY Yes, really... doing nicely... as if by itself. I happen like an event... a quite distant event...

DERMOT And what would you like to happen to you?

HATTY I'd like to be missing somewhere.

DERMOT Somewhere you're bound to be missing.

HATTY My husband can't be without me for a minute.

DERMOT And then what? What do you really want?

HATTY For me to miss somebody.

DERMOT That sounds more honest.

HATTY Or to be alone for a while. For the past forty year I haven't been alone for a second.

DERMOT Your husband was making out that he wanted to go away...

HATTY There's no danger of that... He wouldn't know where I am.

DERMOT Your hands are warm.

HATTY And my hair is warm. I'm warm all over.

DERMOT Do you sleep with your husband?

HATTY We've got arrangements... or at least we used to. Now I've stopped picking up the phone.

DERMOT Does that suit him?

HATTY I can't read his mind.

DERMOT Would you like to?

HATTY Believing in empathy is a sign of immaturity.

DERMOT What's your number?

HATTY Telephone number or dress-size? I can fit into anything. I fit everywhere, but I don't belong anywhere. A girl for everything.

DERMOT A wild card! A Joker!

HATTY Exactly... I make a joke out of myself because I don't have the courage to make any other sort of jokes.

DERMOT Can't you behave like a child for one minute?

HATTY For as long as I can remember, I've been an adult. People used to come and stare at me as if at a miracle: I always did as I was told. Nothing else ever occurred to me... Whenever I tried to do anything, father told my eyes were far too big and greedy.

DERMOT It must have been difficult for you. With your big... beautiful...

HATTY Now I wear dark glasses and I don't have a problem

DERMOT Do you know why you don't have children?

HATTY Is it so obvious?

DERMOT Are you afraid.... That they'll be sickly, stupid, ugly...

HATTY And won't they be?

DERMOT Maybe. But there's nothing that you can do about it.

HATTY Ow. Why... Let go..

DERMOT Did that hurt? You see, nothing's as terrible as we think it is...

HATTY Why do people take my phobias and force me to have theirs instead? I want to be afraid of what I've always been afraid of.

DERMOT Don't you want to come flying with me sometime?

HATTY What for?

DERMOT I only know on what, not what for... Let yourself be carried away.

HATTY And then fall? No thank you..

DERMOT Sailing is a marvellous thing.

HATTY Maybe. Up till now nothing's been plain sailing for me.

DERMOT I am the prescription for anxious women.

MUSIC

THE RELAXATION ROOM

CHARLIE You're still here? You're lying there like a mummy. Not even your nose is sticking out. I'm looking for my wife. She was dressed already... You haven't seen her, have you?

BABS No.

CHARLIE Are you relaxing?

BABS Don't touch me!

CHARLIE I'm not touching you.

BABS Leave me alone!

CHARLIE I just wanted to ... Do you need help? You look so miserable.

BABS You've really cheered me up.

CHARLIE Has your parachutist already left? Has he already left you to fly solo, Boobs?

BABS I like flying.

CHARLIE I wouldn't like to in your state... Do you need to be taken somewhere? Or just taken?

BABS Go and look for your wife.

CHARLIE That's what I'm doing

BABS ... your own wife.

CHARLIE I'm just looking at you.

BABS It hurts.

CHARLIE I like you. What do you do exactly?

BABS I'm an investigative journalist.

CHARLIE You can't be a journalist, that wouldn't suit you... You should work for an advertising company. Don't you work in advertising? My wife could only just about do an advert for photocopiers.

BABS Do you think that I'd manage washing powder as well?

CHARLIE They wouldn't let you looking like you do now.

BABS Please!

CHARLIE You don't have please for anything...

BABS Please!

CHARLIE Yes? So say what I can do for you?

BABS Would you mind leaving me along at last? I have to get dressed.

CHARLIE Oh, of course... But, er... Here's my business card... If you ever need anything. Shouldn't I just wait outside?

BABS I don't think so.

CHARLIE I'm going then...

BABS Fine. I'd be grateful.

CHARLIE So... Good-bye... I wish you peace and love on this exceptional day.

BABS Peace and love?

CHARLIE A strange combination, isn't it?

MUSIC

THE GYM

HATTY Where have you dragged me?

DERMOT Don't you want to get fit?

HATTY Are you crazy!

DERMOT And are you quite normal?

HATTY No... I'm a text-book parablomic.

DERMOT is that a cross between bulimia and paranoia?

HATTY Repression of ones own will...

DERMOT And is that a diagnosis or a virtue?

HATTY It's a life-long problem. My husband...

DERMOT Forget about him. Forget about a child. There're a thousand other ways of being happy. Children aren't necessarily a prize.

HATTY Nor are lovers.

DERMOT That's not the way. You can't keep on being so terribly distant towards yourself. Just once in your life you have to jump right into the shit.

HATTY Alright then... Love me, I shall touch you, limit you and organize your life...

DERMOT And you complain that you're lacking in courage!

HATTY I get out of everything at the last minute.

DERMOT Really?

HATTY Do you have many women?

DERMOT I don't count.

HATTY One after another or at the same time?

DERMOT Don't analyse me.

HATTY I don't even have your number.

DERMOT We haven't swapped business cards.

HATTY Does this often happen to you?

DERMOT We won't resolve this...

HATTY Will you leave me then?

DERMOT Don't boss me about.

HATTY How do I look to you?

DERMOT Like a cream-puff.

HATTY A fatty-puff?

DERMOT You provoke everybody into hurting you.

MUSIC

SOUND In the distance, men swearing. The voice of Dick can be heard, and the frightened cries of the others. A bang, broken glass, shots are fired...

DERMOT Shush. Quiet! Don't move.

HLASY We're going, so what are we waiting for...

DERMOT Do those Charlies want to get killed or something? I hope that Babs isn't...

SOUND a bag falling and things being picked up.

HATTY Sorry. I was frightened... Those are my...

DERMOT Wait, I'll help you.... I never understand what women carry in their handbags.

Why do you carry all that stuff about with you?

HATTY In case I get taken hostage.

DERMOT Have you also got a first aid kit in case you stay single?

HATTY If you're single you don't need anything... You just need to love.

DERMOT Then you should pack a condom along with your credit card.

HATTY Tell me the truth...

DERMOT Sorry... I have to go and find Babs.

HATTY Did I scare you?

DERMOT It doesn't matter what sort of make-up you put on, your eyes will still be too big...

HATTY And what should I do with them?

DERMOT Look... Maybe I'll ring you sometime, but don't expect much.

HATTY I'm not expecting anything... You haven't got my number.

MUSIC

THE FOYER

DERMOT Are you alright, Babe?

BABS Did you wait for me?

DERMOT Babsie, did anything happen to you?

BABS No... just...

DERMOT We were lucky that we were all hiding somewhere

BABS Where were you? Did you see what happened?

DERMOT No...

BABS Do you think that it's all over?

DERMOT Shush. Someone's coming...

CHARLIE Have you seen my wife anywhere? I hope that she...

DERMOT Nothing's happened to her.

CHARLIE Did you frighten her, Dearo?

BABS Have you been outside? Have all of them gone?

CHARLIE Yes, they ran in , smashed up as much as they could... They dragged Dick out onto the street...

BABS Did they kill him?

CHARLIE We'll see, somebody's with him now..

DERMOT Where did you see it all from?

CHARLIE I was right by the car...

BABS That was where I was meant to be...

DERMOT Wait, I'll take you home...

BABS Are you coming to collect your things from my place?

DERMOT Babe...

SOUND The beep of a text message.

DERMOT Hmm...

BABS Somebody loves you, isn't that right? How do you feel now? Embarrassed?

DERMOT I'm not going to just leave you here.

BABS Are we going to be responsible for each other for ever? I've already taken your name off the door-bell.

DERMOT Then I'd like to leave something at your place.

BABS Socks?

DERMOT Or maybe this T-shirt?

BABS And what am I meant to do with that. Knit a man out of it?

DERMOT But I have to leave something at your place. Don't leave me.

BABS You left me! Why are you coming with me now? Do you want to sleep with me again?

CHARLIE You know that I saved you girlfriend's life.

BABS You?

CHARLIE If I hadn't been chatting and kept you behind, maybe you would have been right where they were shooting.

BABS Then we're quits.

CHARLIE Where is that depressive wife of mine?

HATTY I'm here.

CHARLIE Where have you been? We could have easily have lost our lives in that Relax Centre of yours. Weren't you dressed before? What's happened to your sweater?

HATTY I ripped the sleeve on a door-handle.

DERMOT Do you understand what happened?

CHARLIE Sure. Some of Dickhead got too big for his boots. People like that have to own everything, organise everything, have their fingers in every pie...

HATTY Do you have to have an opinion on everything? This too? You almost die and you're still thinking of something?

CHARLIE Where are you going? I'll give you a lift...

HATTY I want to walk.

CHARLIE Two hours?

HATTY I've got time... my whole life.

CHARLIE You'll be afraid.

HATTY The only people who're afraid are people who are scared of being alone for a minute.

CHARLIE Yuk! Is that some quotation I'm meant to know? You're in shock, you can't...

HATTY Yes, I'm in shock, Right now I couldn't bear being in a confined space with you...

SOUND A mobile rings

CHARLIE A new phobia?

Isn't that your mobile, Patty?

HATTY I can't remember.

CHARLIE Typical. And yours, Boob?

BABS Mine's switched off.

HATTY What about his?

BABS Our Dick? He used to shout at everybody to switch of their mobile, and now his is ringing, you mean?

DERMOT That's why you never should ask for whom the mobile tolls.

BABS He was a terrible Dick.

HATTY Do you think he isn't one any longer? We should go and have a look...

BABS Aren't the police are somebody going to come?

CHARLIE Sure they'll come, it's all over now.

BABS What's all over?

HATTY We'll find out from the evening news.

CHARLIE Are we going?

HATTY You stay here. Somebody has to explain to the police what happened... And you're the only one who understand it all.

CHARLIE Once again you just think I'm a Charlie; well OK...

DERMOT Aren't you going to give us a lift into the centre of town?

CHARLIE Get a handsome young man to help you...

HATTY Do you always have to be in control?

DERMOT Are you coming?

BABS Yes.

HATTY Yes.

CHARLIE Run and save yourselves.

BABS At any moment life can end so stupidly.

HATTY Or begin.

MUSIC, VOICES

XXX