

Viliam Klimáček

SUPERMARKET

The day you did not shop is lost on you.

Authorized version for the Slovak National Theater.

Characters:

EVA	20 years old
PETER	60 years old
IAN	30 years old
KARIN	27 years old
ANNA	55 years old

1. Supermarket Hall

Ian in a flawless suit is hiring Peter.

IAN Do not ever look at women's breasts. I hate that at work.
PETER Of course.
IAN And careful with the eyes.
PETER Careful with the eyes.
IAN Clear?
PETER Eyes are bastards.
IAN Excuse me?
PETER They lie.
IAN They mesmerize you with their eyes and are stealing in the meantime. There's a lot of theft here.

ANNA'S VOICE *Gong from the speakers.*
Dear customers, we would like to bring your attention to our special discounts in the men's underwear department. A sixpack of black socks is on sale.
Gong.

IAN So much stuff in one place drives people crazy. Women are especially vulnerable. Wanna take a guess what the biggest aphrodisiac is for female shoplifters?
PETER Men's briefs?
IAN Laundry detergents. The exciting smells. They must be mixing in some pheromones. Women lose their heads next to the laundry detergents and go on a shoplifting spree. And they steal what?
PETER Men's briefs?
IAN Cosmetics!
PETER Hard to steal a twenty-pound box of Tide.
IAN You'd be surprised.

ANNA'S VOICE *Gong from the speakers.*
Our lingerie department is now featuring the ladies' intimate apparel show. Winter pink now replaces spring purple.
Gong.

IAN This is an exciting place, it gives you the feeling of limitless possibilities. You come here to buy a stick of gum and leave with a microwave. People go home after having shopped and have to relieve their tension with sex. Thirty-three percent of conceptions happen after a visit to the supermarket!
PETER I unpack my plastic bags and keel over on a sofa.
IAN And then?
PETER I put on the TV.
IAN That's why you are our security guard.

PETER I'm proud of it, sir.
IAN Former cop?
PETER Secret service, sir.
IAN Don't call me sir all the time.
PETER I used to guard the pillars of our former regime.
IAN Now you'll guard the pillars of the current regime.
PETER Free market?
IAN Female shoppers. Beware of them! They're capable of anything. They will try on blouses in a fitting room and hide the goods deep inside them. A lady once carried out twenty-two Dior lipsticks. I don't have to tell you where.
ANNA'S VOICE *Gong from the speakers.*
The book and video department is now offering the new novel "Quartering a Woman" by the best-selling author of "Men are Pigs".
Gong.
PETER Twenty-two? I can't possibly look up their...
IAN Sure you can. Call in a female clerk. And don't forget always to be discreet.
PETER To shoplifters?!
IAN A shoplifter is our future customer. We have to admonish, but not discourage her.
Next time she'll take her money elsewhere.
PETER Do men steal less?
IAN They steal with no imagination. Eighty percent of them cry when they're apprehended.
It is really embarrassing.
PETER You'll be happy with me.
IAN I hope so. If you don't catch your first shoplifter within three days I will have to fire you.

x x x

Bored Eva is selling CDs. Karin is wearing earphones and dancing to music which we cannot hear.

EVA I bet she doesn't buy again.
KARIN *Takes off her earphones.*
What?
EVA Would you like to get this CD?
KARIN It's good.
She puts on the headset again and continues dancing. Ian enters, unnoticed, and observes the women.
EVA Fucking work.
KARIN *Takes off her earphones.*
Did you say anything?
She puts on the headset and dances.
EVA She's been coming here for a month, listening to the same CD over and over again.
She doesn't steal. Doesn't get in the way. Doesn't bother anyone. I hate her.
KARIN *Takes off her earphones.*
You were saying something just now!
EVA That everything's OK.
Karin puts on the headset and dances. Eva is bored.
IAN *Looks at Eva's name tag.*
Eva? Admit it... Eva. You don't like music.

EVA I used to. Before I started selling it.
IAN How long have you been with us?
EVA A month.
IAN *Watching Karin dance, she does not notice him.*
This woman has been coming here for a year. Every morning between eight and eleven. She drops the kid with the babysitter and goes to the health club. Then she takes a shower and comes here to do some listening.
ANNA'S VOICE *Gong.*
Dear customers, we invite you to use our Preferred Customer Gold Card to get an amazing discount on a special item every day. Gold Cards are available at every cash register.
Gong.
IAN You know what she listens to?
EVA Violins.
IAN Some people call it Vivaldi. You know what kind of work goes best with Vivaldi? Boning meat goes really well with it. One third of top-notch chefs listen to Vivaldi at work.
EVA *Looks at dancing Karin.*
She doesn't look like a chef.
IAN She's an actress but she doesn't perform anywhere. She's a mother of a three-month old boy. She plays that sometimes. I should fire you. For inappropriate treatment of a customer.
Eva takes off her jacket and hands it to him.
There is a vacancy in the freezer department. Meat will cool your head off.
EVA Why do you take it so personally?
IAN I don't take anything personally.
EVA Sure you do.
IAN I don't.
EVA Did it offend you what I said about her?
IAN Nothing offended me.
EVA I can see, okay?!
IAN Now this, dammit, offended me!
EVA I'm off to that meat department.
IAN *Looking at Karin.*
That's my wife.

x x x

Peter, wearing an old sweater, is walking between the aisles with a walkie-talkie.

PETER Watching Brigitte Bardot, watching Brigitte Bardot! She's holding a can of hair spray! She shoved it in her pocket! Damn! She put it back. I'll get a heart attack. She's walking over to the cash register.
IAN *Enters.*
You still have today.
PETER I almost had her!
IAN I'll wait till twelve midnight.
PETER You bet, sir.
IAN Either you bring me a thief or you're fired.
PETER I need the job.

IAN Every day they steal thirty-three thousand crowns worth of goods from us. We are not rich enough to subsidize this country.

PETER I'll get her, sir.

IAN Get who?

PETER Brigitte Bardot.

IAN Brigitte Bardot?

PETER A blonde in her forties. She steals in the cosmetics.

IAN Did you get her?

PETER She returned the goods.

IAN *Amused.*
Brigitte Bardot.

PETER I name them after actresses.

IAN Why not Sharon Stone?

PETER Those are not my kind of movies, sir.

IAN Don't call me sir.

PETER *The sound of walkie-talkie.*
Over. Mastroianni in the deli.
Turns off the walkie-talkie.
Tortellini are disappearing, sir.

IAN Stop calling me that. And put on a suit. You look like a homeless person.

PETER I want to look inconspicuous.

IAN Where have you been? Only beautiful people shop here. Have you noticed how the world has changed? There are more and more beautiful people in it. They don't go to church even on Sundays any more. They go shopping. We have to do everything possible to make sure they come back to us. Because they are happy here. So don't spoil it for them. Now go get me your Mastroianni.

x x x

Eva is smoking weed in the freezer next to beef.

EVA The only thing my mother ever taught me to make was beef steak. Quick meat. You salt it, whack it a few times, plop it in a pan with oil. When I see these cows hanging on hooks, I don't think I'll ever eat meat again. This is a fucked up system. They throw your beloved things at you and make you hate them for that. They want to make us into robots. A good robot works all day, shops and wants to have some fun. When the robot breaks, they put him in the freezer.

PETER *Enters and puts out her cigarette.*
You crazy?! The alarm will go off!

EVA In the freezer?

PETER In the freezer!

EVA You can't have a fire in the freezer!

PETER How come?

EVA The fire would freeze.

PETER I didn't know that.

EVA What kind of grades were you getting in physics?

PETER Aren't we being just a tad rude?!

IAN *Enters.*
What is smoke doing in the freezer?!
To Eva.

And I gave you a chance.

EVA To work behind the counter until I die like my mother?

IAN Get out.

EVA When she suffered the stroke in the store, she was covered with hair from those disgusting rugs she kept selling all her life.

IAN Guard, take her outside.

PETER For a cigarette?!

IAN *Leans over Peter's name tag.*
Congratulations on your first thief.

EVA I didn't steal!

IAN You're worse. You're a washed-out junkie. Repeat, Peter.

PETER Washed-out... junkie.

EVA *She reads Ian's name tag.*
Ian... how did you get a name like that?

IAN Does the techno generation know who is Jethro Tull?

EVA British big beat, right?

IAN My father loved it. The singer's name was Anderson. Ian Anderson.

EVA Daddy was a hippie, eh? Why are you ashamed of her? Do you even love her?
The girl with the headphones?

IAN I will make sure no store on earth will ever employ you.

EVA You're not firing me. You're trying to get rid of her.
Peter pushes Eva. When they leave, Ian finishes the joint.

IAN Good weed.

2. Dubbing

Karin is dubbing a soap opera on a loop, she is wearing a headset. She is watching the video of a rich lady sitting in a luscious armchair. Behind her – also in the video – is an actor in high boots and a sombrero, playing Pedro. The lady in the video is on the phone. The loop repeats over and over again.

KARIN No, father, I will not give you my number. What happened between us is unforgivable. That morning...
She makes a mistake, waits for the beginning of the loop again.
No, father, I will not give you my number. What happened between us is unforgivable.
That morning in Buenos Aires... yes, I was six...
Prematurely turns to Ian in the video.
Don't stand here like an idiot, Pedro!
Waits for the beginning of the loop.

DIRECTOR'S VOICE *From the speaker.*
Easy, Karin, take it again.

KARIN No, father, I will not give you my number. What happened between us... shit!

DIRECTOR'S VOICE *From the speaker.*
Take it from Buenos Aires.

KARIN *Waits for the right moment in the loop*
That morning in Buenos Aires... yes, I was six... Don't stand here like an idiot, Pedro!
Ian in the video walks away.
You came into my bedroom, father...

Karin is silent, the video goes on.

DIRECTOR'S VOICE *From the speaker.*
Are you OK? Let's take it from Pedro.

KARIN'S VOICE Don't stand here like an idiot, Pedro!

KARIN You came into my bedroom, father... you kissed me... Vivaldi was on in the drawing room... your big girl closed her eyes... and was never a little girl again...
Takes off her headset.
This is incredible bullshit.

DIRECTOR'S VOICE *From the speaker.*
Karin, I didn't write it.

KARIN I'm sorry.

DIRECTOR'S VOICE *From the speaker.*
Take five. And please, your mother is trying to get in again.

KARIN Again?!

DIRECTOR'S VOICE *From the speaker.*
Take care of it, OK?
Karin walks out of the studio. Anna is there.

KARIN What do you want again?!

ANNA *Enthusiastic.*
I found measles!

KARIN What measles?

ANNA For Pete! A granddaughter of a girlfriend of mine has measles!

KARIN So what?!

ANNA If you take Pete to their house for a visit, he can get it right away!

KARIN You're losing it!

ANNA Everybody does that! You'd be done with it!

KARIN I'm not going to infect my own child!

ANNA And how do you think you got it? I took you to play with Alenka Schwarz, and that was that.

KARIN Thanks a million.

ANNA Yesterday I read an ad... looking for a child with chicken pox. Why were they looking for chicken pox, what do you think?!

Karin wants to leave.
I'm trying to help and you ignore me!

KARIN You're behaving like a crazy cow.

ANNA Excuse me?! I'm your mother!

KARIN I'm sorry.

ANNA You really don't miss me?

KARIN Mom...

ANNA Sweetie...?

KARIN Don't come to out place for at least a month. I'm begging you.

ANNA Are you forbidding me to see my grandson?!

KARIN If he wasn't around we'd have nothing to talk about.

ANNA We had a great Christmas, didn't we?

KARIN Disaster.

ANNA Did I cut up the Christmas tree with the poultry scissors?!

KARIN Ian did it because of you! Worst Christmas ever!

ANNA I've never seen a daughter argue with her husband in front of her own mother! Right under the tree! You know how I felt? When your father and I had something between us, we dealt with it ourselves!

KARIN And you played the turntable all night so that I wouldn't hear you!

ANNA Did it have to be in the paper?! An actress had a fight with her husband?!

KARIN We sued the paper.

ANNA *Tries to hug her daughter, Karin slips away.*

They say you go to the supermarket to listen to music...

Karin nods.

That voice in the speakers, that's me.

Karin nods.

A clerk came up to me, you know, we used to have recitals together. Sometimes I watch you in secret. There is a one-way mirror, we can watch out for thieves from behind. What are you dubbing now?

KARIN "Passions of the Coast".

ANNA Do you get a screen credit?

KARIN They only read my name, mom. Dubbing is not written on screen.

DIRECTOR'S VOICE Everybody, let's go!

Karin runs into the studio, Anna calls behind her.

ANNA You're not going to get a divorce, right?!

Red DO NOT ENTER light comes on.

3. Video Services

Peter is drinking vodka at home.

PETER I often dream there are no people in the supermarket, I am walking among the never ending rows of shelves and I am leading Marta, my wife, by the hand. Marta's mouth is wide open in awe, but she's not saying anything. She's been dead for fifteen years. Look at all the different kinds of chips, can you believe it? We only used to have the salty kind. And now? Pepper, garlic, onion, chili, ham, bacon, soy, kosher, and look, potato chip animals. Kids love them. They play puppet theater with chips. And impressed Marta sighs, she wants to give me a kiss and when I lean over her, there is no one there...

ANNA *Enters.*

Video services, Peter?

PETER *Hides the bottle.*

Something like that.

ANNA I found your leaflet. About the video services. In a supermarket by the highway.

PETER I work there.

ANNA Me too!

PETER Really? I don't remember you.

ANNA I was sick for a while. Do you make video transfers?

PETER Of course. Pardon the mess, I work from my home. That's the advantage, I pay my own rent.

ANNA Am I disturbing you?

PETER Not at all, I've been working like this for many years. I had the first video camera in the city. I opened my business when they were still celebrating the revolution. Nobody had a video camera then. Weddings, baptisms, company parties... it was a good living for a few years.

Anna hands him an 8 mm film in a box.

Eight mil? Everyone has switched to digital by now.

He loads the film into the projector. We can see black and white images from a hand-held camera. Young Anna is taking a walk with a little girl, the cameraman's shadow is following them.

PETER Is that you?

ANNA It's hard to look at it.

PETER Your daughter?

ANNA *She nods.*

That shadow, that's my husband. He's no longer alive. He used to hurt me so much.

PETER I'm not trying to pry.

ANNA He cheated on me all the time. At least once a week.

PETER Good pace. At work we used to say that a guy like that would fuck a pile of wood... what?

Anna does not share his jovial tone.

Will one copy be enough?

ANNA I was scared every night. I pretended to sleep but he didn't go for it. He stank of that strange perfume as he lied down next to me as if nothing happened. We argued like crazy every time. He put on a record so that our daughter wouldn't hear us. Vivaldi... To this day I hate that music. That's when I started to write poems. I was slipping them into his bags when I was packing for his business trips. Into his shirts. This one I sent with him to Karl Marx Stadt.

PETER You don't have to...

ANNA I want to.

Recites.

One morning all the men's birds
Crawled out of their pants looked around
And flew away from their owners
Far far away to the north
To the land of eternal chill
And men were waking up
With empty crotches
First they screamed a bit or rather
Screamed quite a lot yelled raged begged
Then they yelled less and the third day
They calmed down and were at peace
As never before I think
My husband may have finally understood me
For the first time all night long
We just lied until the morning
We talked
And planned a vacation
Somewhere far away
Maybe even
In the north

The black and white film ends.

PETER Your copy is ready, ma'am.

ANNA Please call me Anna.

PETER Anna, that was a beautiful poem. Although I'm not sure if I shouldn't feel offended. On behalf of all men.

ANNA I hated him and now I miss him.

PETER I keep dreaming about my wife. I never told her how much I needed her. When she was alive. Now I'm sorry I didn't. I used to be with Secret Service, you know...

ANNA You don't have to...

PETER I want to. When I was on duty, one time, during a night shift, I jerked off, you understand...

ANNA That sometimes happens when you're married.

PETER ...And suddenly I couldn't imagine doing any other woman than Marta. You understand? Then I understood how much I loved her. But I guess now it's too late, right?

Hands the video cassette to Anna.

ANNA How much do I owe you?

PETER Nothing. It's for the poems. Wait!
Anna is pulling out money, Peter holds her hand.
 I'm going to play you something else.
He puts on his own video. We can see a video with prostitutes lined by the side of the road. A detail of one of them reveals Eva.

ANNA Did you shoot that?

PETER Through the warehouse window. This is the road behind our supermarket.

ANNA Why are you showing this to me?
Peter freeze frames the image of Eva.

PETER Former employee. A month ago she was with us and now she works a hundred yards away. You know what makes a person fall down a hundred yards? A single cigarette.

ANNA *Looking at Eva's picture.*
 My daughter used to listen to music in her department. I have to go. Goodbye.

PETER Goodbye.
Anna leaves. Peter pulls out a hidden tape recorder where he secretly recorded the conversation. He rewinds the tape a bit and listens.

ANNA'S VOICE ...all the men's birds crawled out of their pants looked around...
Peter fast forwards the tape, listens to Anna's voice.
 Can you transcribe it on a tape?

PETER'S VOICE You're in luck...
Peter rewinds the tape to the beginning. He narrates into the microphone.

PETER Anna. Fifty-five years old. Widow, one child. Recorded on Thursday, the seventeenth, at seven-thirty PM.
He takes the tape out of the tape player and puts it into a cardboard box. In it, there are hundreds of other tapes like that.

4. Interview

A living room of a modern house. TV is on with sound on mute. Soap opera "Passions of the Coast" is on.

KARIN I've got to get that role.

IAN You're good, you'll get it.

KARIN There are thousands like me?

IAN You're the best, Karin.

KARIN But it's in Germany!

IAN They need some eastern faces, you see?

KARIN I don't have an eastern face!

IAN Alright, my Swedish angel, but you have the accent...

KARIN I go to a language school for two years and the very first store clerk in Dresden asks me – Woher kommen sie?!

IAN Consider it an advantage, your accent.

KARIN I can only play an Eastern European hooker!

IAN The role is good. Twenty-three days of filming.

KARIN „Nina von Autobahn“! In leather hot pants by the highway.

IAN You're an actress, aren't you? Once you're a hooker, once you're a queen.

KARIN When was I ever a queen?!

IAN Well... in "Enchanted Little Cook"!

KARIN A princess that fell into the dough! In the third shot! All my life I keep getting roles only in B-movies.

IAN *Kisses her.*
Let's go over it again. You'll get there and win the casting call.

KARIN I'm in the last round.

IAN You see! And how many girls are there?

KARIN Four.

IAN And how many slept with the producer?

KARIN Four.

IAN And you're telling me just like this, you whore?!

KARIN You said this was OK!

IAN I know, fuck!

KARIN It's business!

IAN Alright, business!

KARIN You know what it means to shoot in Germany?!

IAN Your own chair, your own hot pants.

KARIN You're embarrassing yourself.

IAN OK. I'm OK!

KARIN The producer took it professionally too.

IAN That drooling bald head that fifteen years ago used to drive an old lemon, the farthest ever getting to Bulgaria?!

KARIN There you go. And look at where he is and where we are.

IAN I'm OK. It's business.
Calms down. Hugs Karin.
Fucked and still without the role. Are you counting on such an option?

KARIN If you don't help me.

IAN Should I go sleep with him?!

KARIN I'm not authentic enough. Go get me a prostitute.

IAN You crazy?

KARIN You don't love me.

IAN If they give you Ophelia, are you going to drown yourself first?!

KARIN You're gross.
Ian starts unbuttoning her blouse, Karin resists. Ian gives up.

IAN Alright. I'll get her. You'll be Nina von Autobahn.
He leaves.

5. Highway

Occasional sound of passing cars. Ian approaches Eva clad in a revealing dress.

EVA Looking for a good time?

IAN I'm looking for a girl like you.

EVA Super.

IAN To talk.

Eva starts laughing.

I just want to talk.

EVA Nice try.

IAN Just you, me and my wife.

EVA I don't do threesomes.

IAN I know it looks strange but I really just need to have an ordinary talk... about your work.

EVA Does she still listen to Vivaldi?

IAN Excuse me?

EVA She used to come to this supermarket. She kept listening to the same CD.

IAN How do you know?

EVA You fired me because of her.

Ian does not remember.

Washed-out junkie.

IAN There are thousands of chicks. Who can remember them all?!

Eva is leaving.

Wait!

Eva comes back. She strokes Ian's face.

Just for a talk, is that clear?!

EVA Go home. Barbie is waiting for you. And little Ken is waiting for his daddy, right?

IAN You can't piss me off.

EVA She dubs Linda's voice very well.

IAN What?

EVA Your wife has a good voice.

IAN You watch that?

EVA All the girls from here to the far East watch "Passions of the Coast". When it's on you won't find a working girl by the highway.

IAN You really worked there?

EVA In the supermarket? CDs, meat, goodbye.

IAN Now I remember. You're the girl from the freezer.

EVA Bingo.

IAN So I fired you, so. Now what?

EVA Nothing. You asked.

IAN Where did you go from there?

EVA Who is who.

IAN Is that an erotic massage parlor?

EVA Encyclopedia. I was trying to score business people for entries. They got their picture and a bio in the book. Not a single copy went to a store. All of them were bought for private collections. Nine thousand crowns in leather, six thousand in velvet, hard cover went for three. Everyone who paid was there. Boards of directors. Soccer clubs. Anyone you want.

IAN Better than the freezer, wasn't it?

EVA I managed eighty-nine research interviews.
IAN We have so many personalities?
EVA Every other guy was only thinking of how to make me spread my legs. Every fourth guy actually told me that.
IAN And how many scored?
EVA Five.
IAN *Counting for minute.*
That's every nineteenth. How long do you plan on doing this?
EVA I need the money.
IAN And when you have it?
EVA Just a little bit longer. I want to see what I can get out of it.
IAN What if it's forever?
EVA What is forever these days?
IAN *Sticks his hands into Eva's armpits and smells them.*
Women who sweat excite me. Karin never sweats. She always smells like Margaret Astor when they roll up the window in the morning. She's made of plastic. She never had a real orgasm.
EVA That wouldn't be your fault, would it?
IAN She could at least pretend, right?! Let's go into my car.
EVA *Takes off her pantyhose.*
I don't like it when men mess up my skirt. You're not going to be a pig, OK?
IAN I won't.
EVA Say the whole sentence.
IAN I won't be a pig.
EVA Say it all.
IAN I won't be a pig and I won't mess up your skirt with my cum.
EVA Call me ma'am.
IAN I won't mess your skirt with my cum, ma'am.
EVA Miss.
IAN Miss.
Smelling his hands.
You excite me so much.
EVA Call me ma'am!
IAN Excite me – ma'am.
EVA Miss!
IAN Miss.
Kissing her.
EVA You never cared about the others, right?
IAN I care about you... about you, ma'am.
EVA I really feel sorry for your kid.
IAN What are you trying on me?
EVA A dirtbag like you will never get it.
IAN *He grabs her violently.*
I'm going to fuck you in the ass first.
EVA Call me ma'am.
IAN You're so good when you resist like this.
EVA Ma'am!
IAN You're good... ma'am.
EVA OK. Let's go to the car.
Ian lets go of her, Eva kicks him in the crotch, Ian falls.

Now fuck off, you creep.

Ian is trying to get off the ground, Eva is leaving with pantyhose in her hand. Ian yells after her.

IAN What about that interview?!

x x x

Karin is sitting in a café. She is nervous; she is on her second shot of cognac. Ian comes in and is calling from the door.

IAN Nina von Autobahn!

Eva enters.

What will you have?

EVA Nothing.

KARIN I'm Karin. Hey.

EVA *They shake hands.*

Eva. Hey. I've seen you before. In an aerobics video.

IAN Karin is supposed to be in that movie, you know.

EVA Playing a hooker from the East.

KARIN Have you ever been in love?

EVA You mean on the job?!

KARIN I mean regular.

EVA *Nods.*

I've never spoken so little as with him, you know. If he really cares about you he has to be able to say it in three words. The fourth one is going to be a lie.

IAN Are you on something?

EVA *Rolls up her sleeve, you can see needle marks.*

I work so that I can shoot. I shoot so that I can work.

IAN *To Karin.*

Eva hooks by the supermarket.

EVA By the exit. Everybody slows down and stares. A Polish guy once slammed into a pole. Teenagers are the worst. When it gets dark they gang up and come in groups of five. They circle around on their bikes and throw beer cans at us. A friend of mine got raped.

IAN You mean, they didn't pay?

EVA Do you know what rape is?!

Notices a plastic horn for a children's bike that Karen bought for her son.

For your son?

IAN *To Karin.*

Pete can't ride a bike.

KARIN He'll learn.

EVA *Honks the horn.*

I used to have one like that.

KARIN Do you use a condom?

EVA Banana.

KARIN What do you mean, banana?

EVA They have different flavors.

She pulls out a collection of condoms from her jacket.

Some people like raspberry, others like kiwi. Mango is disgusting, just like vomit. I would never take such a thing in my mouth, that's for sure.

KARIN Do you always do it with protection?

EVA Depends on the guy.

IAN Do you have someone?

EVA Stick to work, OK?!

KARIN *Helplessly holding the condom in her hand.*
Do you have a... move?

EVA *Demonstrates putting on a condom.*
Moisten it with saliva... try it.
Karin licks it.
Rub it like this.
Suddenly Karin does not know what to do next. Ian gives her two fingers and she pulls the condom over them.

IAN That's a good start.

EVA That's what Hugh Grant said.

KARIN The actor who got busted with a whore?
To Eva.
Sorry.

EVA His girlfriend, that actress...
To Karin.
...I'm sorry... canceled the engagement.

IAN Little sensitive, wasn't she?

KARIN Somebody gives my guy a blow job in America and I'm supposed to marry him?!
Opens her notebook and gets a pen ready. To Eva.
Do you have any special positions? I mean, hips, ass, when you stand on the median?

EVA On what?

IAN The median, the magic place where the asphalt gradually becomes grass.

KARIN *Irritated, to Ian.*
Go get me a coke, alright?!
Ian leaves.

EVA I just wait. Everybody knows I'm not selling peanuts here. You bet that half of us have a kid at home that our friends are watching. Have you ever been fucked in a semi next to a pile of presents that the beloved daddy is bringing to his children, and when he accidentally ejaculates on a paper box with a blue toy car and wipes it with your jacket, he slaps you in the face because you soiled his memory of his beautiful family who is thinking about him a thousand miles away, how hard he has to work behind the wheel?
Eva lights up a cigarette. Karin is not taking notes.
You get used to sleeping during the day. You make a hundred grand but you're always penniless. You end up sitting in a dingy cafe answering questions of some actress who is about to sell your story to a movie theater... you got that?!
Karin does not write down a single word.

IAN *Enters with a bottle of coke.*
Did you know you get three pints of coke in this bottle?

KARIN Idiot.

EVA *Karin wants to get up, Eva stops her.*
Come on. I've got fun stories too.

KARIN *To Eva.*
I'm not such a jerk as you think!

Kisses Eva, uses her tongue.

EVA Once I had a Dutch customer. He didn't want anything; he just kept sticking stuff inside me. In the end he pulled out a diving watch. That excited him the most. He put it up there but couldn't get it out again. He was furious, as if it was my fault! We had to go to a hospital but they couldn't pull it out.

KARIN What did they do?

EVA *Points at her stomach.*

It is wandering somewhere there.

Eva gestures for them to come closer. Karin and Ian listen to Eva's stomach.

KARIN Ticking. They're really ticking!

IAN That's a bomb.

KARIN They're still ticking.

IAN You're a time bomb.

Eva's cell phone starts beeping. She reads the message.

EVA Sorry.

To Ian.

Can you give me a lift?

Ian leaves with Eva; Karin orders another shot of cognac.

6. Video

Peter walks into the supermarket dressed in a new suit. Shopping carts flow by him like a river of chrome. Peter is listening to an old announcement with Ian's voice.

IAN'S VOICE Only beautiful people shop here. Have you noticed how the world has changed? There are more and more beautiful people in it. They don't go to church on Sundays any more. They go shopping. We have to do everything possible to make sure they come back to us. Because they are happy here. So don't spoil it for them.

ANNA *Praises Peter's new suit.*

It doesn't even look like you!

PETER We used to wear fatigues in the military. So that you couldn't see us in between the trees.

Shows off his new suit.

These are the fatigues of today. This works really well. You want to go unnoticed? Dress nice.

ANNA Imagine, a reporter from the radio is coming to see me today! She called me.

PETER You have a famous daughter.

ANNA She's coming for me!

PETER You'll be on the radio?

Anna nods, beaming.

I guess I should congratulate you.

ANNA A long time ago I used to recite poems. They are making a radio show about people like that. After all those years I revisited Jesenin, can you imagine I still remember it?

PETER One day you'll recite for me.

ANNA I will.

Gong. Anna makes an announcement into the speakers.

We would like to bring your attention to a special sale. Every time you purchase a 12-pound box of any brand of laundry detergent you become eligible for a drawing for an amazing vacation abroad. You get a ticket to scratch with each package

and you find out the results right away at the cash register! Fresh and clean – like the windows into the world!

Peter leaves for the storage room during the announcement. He gets his camera ready and videotapes Ian and Eva meeting on the road in front of the supermarket. You can hear the noise of cars.

IAN Can't we meet some place else?

EVA I like it here.

IAN I work a stone's throw from here!

EVA This is where I work.

IAN I booked us a hotel room.

EVA Do we have a TV there? If I get bored.

IAN Why do you have to keep pushing me?

EVA When I see you in such incredible suit, I can't resist. You were born with a tie on, right?

Ian wants to get mad, Eva kisses him.

I'll be good now.

They leave. Peter takes the cassette out of his camera, puts it in an envelope and leaves.

7. Conversation

Karin at home, wearing provocative lingerie, tries to stand like a hooker in front of the mirror. She is rehearsing her film role. A tape recorder is playing German dialogue and Karen is practising her pronunciation together with hooking positions.

RECORDED VOICE Wir möchten gern bestellen.

KARIN Wir möchten gern bestellen.

RECORDED VOICE Bitte, was bekommen Sie?

KARIN Bitte, was bekommen Sie?

At the same time on the side, in a parallel space, we see the hotel room. Ian and Eva enter. We see their shadows undressing, dropping clothes, laughing. Karin in her parallel apartment is practising her lines.

RECORDED VOICE Ich nehme eine Gemüsesuppe und einen Schweinebraten.

KARIN Ich nehme eine Gemüsesuppe und einen... what?

She rewinds the tape.

RECORDED VOICE ...eine Gemüsesuppe und einen Schweinebraten.

KARIN Schweinebraten.

RECORDED VOICE Und was möchten Sie trinken?

KARIN Und was möchten Sie trinken?

IAN *Half-naked in the hotel room, wants to make a phone call.*

Dammit, Eva! Be quiet for a second!

Calling on his cell, Karin picks up.

Hey, baby, it's Ian. I got held up at work, some French guys came, we're having a meeting and then some kind of a party.

KARIN The little one keeps asking about you.

IAN Kiss him for me. Can't wait to see you. And put on that lingerie that I brought you from Paris, you know which one.

KARIN I'm rehearsing in it right now.

IAN First course will be undressing you with my teeth...

Eva is taking his shirt off with her teeth.

Second course... you'll see. Bye-bye, gotta go.

He and Eva both hide, we can hear laughter again. A men's shoe comes flying. Karin puts on the tape recorder, pours herself a shot of cognac and keeps rehearsing.

RECORDED VOICE Ein Glas Weisswein, bitte.

KARIN Ein Glas Weisswein, bitte.

RECORDED VOICE Und sie? Was bekommen Sie?

KARIN Und sie?

The cell phone rings again, Karin stops the recorder and picks up. Anna comes in with a phone in her hand.

ANNA Karin, dear, it's your mom! Put on the TV, your fairy-tale is on!

KARIN What fairy-tale?

ANNA "Enchanted Little Cook!"

KARIN And that's why you're calling me?!

ANNA I'm so proud of you.

KARIN I don't have time, mom.

ANNA I hope you have a moment to talk to me!

KARIN God...

ANNA It's been ten years today that your father...

She starts crying.

KARIN I know.

ANNA He was proud of you.

KARIN Now you talk about him?! First time he died was when I was six. You burnt all of his pictures, even the one I kept under my mattress. Then he died the second time. I cried so hard.

ANNA But we managed in the end... didn't we? I changed my job for you! I stopped doing recitals!

KARIN You didn't have to.

ANNA I preferred to stay at home and teach you to speak! Why do you think they want you for every single dubbing job? Because you got your beautiful pronunciation from your mother!

KARIN The only thing you taught me was to change my underwear three times a day.

ANNA You never know who may get to see your underwear.

KARIN The only thing I remember from my childhood is your arm. Pulling me out of a cab going to yet another casting call. You made me lick ice.

ANNA Ice?

KARIN Your freezer was full of it.

ANNA I made you?!

KARIN Ice cubes in the morning and then some in the evening.

ANNA You're making it up! Ice?!

KARIN To make my throat more resistant. I never missed a day of shooting.

ANNA There you see.

KARIN You made me sleep next to you until I was eighteen. You chased away all my boyfriends.

ANNA Yes... your wicked mother... ruined your life!

Starts crying.

KARIN Listen, mom...

ANNA When I saw you on TV for the first time, I cried. My daughter was an actress! The entire crew loved you!

KARIN A child star is like a puppy, you know? First everyone adores her. She can do anything, just like a puppy. She just can't grow up. Because one day they will take you into the woods, leave you there and run away.

ANNA I haven't seen the baby for a month. Are you guys okay?

KARIN Please, don't come to our house any more. Ever.

ANNA What is that supposed to mean? What do you mean... ever?

KARIN I mean, never!

ANNA I'm ill. They're giving me two months.

KARIN Maybe I'm not a good daughter! I can't forgive, I only have this one fucked-up life, and I can't handle it!

ANNA I'm dying, Karin!

KARIN I'll call you.

She turns off the cell phone and puts on the tape recorder. She is sitting, listening to German phrases.

RECORDED VOICE Ein Rindersteak, bitte. Aber keine Pommes frites, ich möchte lieber Bratkartoffeln. Geht das? Ja, natürlich! Und was möchte Sie trinken? Einen Apfelsaft, bitte.

Peter comes to the door of Karin's apartment, lays a package on the floor, rings the doorbell and quickly leaves. Karin answers the door and opens the package. It contains a video cassette. Karin puts it on: we can see Peter's takes of Ian, getting into the car with Eva, the tape is date and time-coded. Cut; new take with a new date stamp - Ian and Eva getting into the car. Cut; new date - Ian and Eva getting into the car... Karin is sitting down, watching, German tape playing in the background.

RECORDED VOICE Wir möchten bitte bezahlen. Das macht 13 Euro. 14, bitte. Vielen Dank!

x x x

Anna in her room.

ANNA I am doing things for the last time today. I went to the ZOO for the last time. That was a real shocker. How dirty and shabby it looked. I used to love to go there with my daughter when they still had the porcupine. We went there at least ten times but we only saw him once. He was an incredibly shy animal. He would always hide inside. I thought I'd have more luck when I went there for the last time. Oh, well. I'll never see a porcupine again. Or those lovely nurses. They keep smiling at people! Young girls, and they smile at an old woman! And they mean it! And that young surgeon held my hand. Shivers went down my spine just like that! The floor looked like a chess board and the doctors resembled chess pieces. All of them white. For a moment I had a feeling I was in a movie and not in a hospital. I expected a clown in a funny red to show up and say – Anna, this was just a bad joke. You don't have cancer after all.

Pulls out an unopened syringe and studies it.

Works for two hours. I can take another shot in the evening. Into my thy. It's easy. Like when you're basting a turkey with rum. Jab it in and then back into the oven. It's more pleasant to die at home than in a hospital. I can listen to music. I can put on a record player, a real vinyl record which skips and hisses. Not some stupid CDs that look like glass coasters. Music on a black record has its weight. Many old things are still true there, things that are laughable today.

I don't care that everybody laughs at me. That my own daughter doesn't take me seriously. I am doing only last things today. I will curse for the last time.

With enthusiasm.

Get bent!

She is laughing like a little girl.

I should have done this earlier! When that woman from the radio came to me, saying – Miss Anna, you used to be a famous poetry reciter. You don't mind lending your beautiful voice – one that used to breathe life into immortal verses of Jesenin – to legitimize a pragmatic place like supermarket, the altar of average dreams?!

Angry.

Altar of average dreams! I should have told her – get bent, miss reporter, I have to make a living!

She puts on the headphones and laughs quietly.

8. Video Service

Peter is playing back the recording that he secretly recorded in the supermarket.

IAN'S VOICE *From the tape.*

Guard, take her outside.

PETER'S VOICE For a cigarette?!

IAN'S VOICE Peter? Congratulations on your first thief.

EVA'S VOICE I didn't steal!

IAN'S VOICE You're worse. You're a washed-out junkie. Repeat, Peter.

PETER'S VOICE Washed-out... junkie.

PETER *Turns off the tape recorder.*

I had to tell her. The guy was looking and I threw her out on the ramp where they load the meat. Washed-out junkie.

Door bell.

It's open!

Ian enters.

What are you doing here?

IAN You live here?

PETER Always been.

IAN There's this thing... I'm looking for a... she gave me her address once, that if something comes up... Eva, you know her?

PETER *Starts laughing.*

If I know her?

Points at boxes full of video cassettes.

I know everyone. I got everyone here in a pile.

Reads the dates on the labels.

What would you like? October 2000? Or New Year's Eve 1992? Everybody was celebrating the birth of a new country. Some were drinking from joy, some were drowning in sorrow. Only I know who was for it and who was against it.

IAN Who cares any more?

PETER You will care.

Peter rewinds the tape and puts it on.

EVA'S VOICE *Recorded.*

Ian... how did you get a name like that?

IAN'S VOICE Does the techno generation know who is Jethro Tull?

EVA'S VOICE British big beat, right?

IAN'S VOICE My father loved it. The singer's name was Anderson. Ian Anderson.
Peter turns off the tape.

IAN What's your point?

PETER One day it can be handy.

IAN Are you trying to blackmail me?

PETER God forbid!

IAN Your colleagues from the secret police are now better off. The all have businesses and make money.

PETER I'm also a businessman.

IAN You spy on people?

PETER I'm refreshing their memory. But this is more like a hobby. Actually, I work in the supermarket.
Takes the tape recorder and hides it in his pocket.
Useful gadget, isn't it? It will record everything in range of up to twenty feet.

IAN How come the Slovak Intelligence Service is not interested in your services?

PETER I'm eavesdropping just for myself. Even then I didn't use to do it just to please my bosses but to keep things in order. So that the country would not disintegrate in chaos. I don't give a damn about politics, but I like things in order. When the regime is capable of keeping things in order, then it has the right to exist. The old regime fell, and the new one survived. Therefore it is viable! That's why I'm helping.

IAN By spying on me?!

PETER I used to record more important people than you, young man. I was there when they ate, when they went to the bathroom, I was one of them. When you spend so much time in high society, you acquire their manners. And not only the good ones! There were some real bastards among them. If they only suspected I had something on them they would have offed me right then and there! That job required a strong stomach. Because important people make many mistakes. Big mistakes! And some of them can be exploited.

IAN *Studies Peter's old camera.*
Did the comrades give this to you as a farewell gift when they were dismanteling the spying secret service?!

Peter takes the camera away from him.
You make me sick to my stomach.
Peter makes a police move to seat him down in an armchair.

PETER Sit down! Once they order me to come to the bedroom. I say, why don't you shoot your games yourselves, I'll give you my equipment, and they say, we've tried it and we're always out of focus! Now let me show you something!
He puts on the tape with Ian and Eva in the car.
This is the so-called True Story. A husband with his mistress. And the wife is watching the whole thing from afar. Trivial, but what can you do?
Camera moves, Karin is sitting in a distant car, watching the lovers.
And they say this country has no movie production! There is plenty of production!
Ian wants to attack him but Peter shakes him off, throwing him back in the armchair.

IAN You bastard!

PETER Sit down or I'll break your arm! I'll play it back for you!

Closeup of Karin's face - she is peacefully watching, when she suddenly sees the lovers.

Check out her expression! Now she spotted you, now she doesn't know anything any more. One more time. From the beginning. She is sitting there, knowing nothing, and then! She sees you! Did you see what it did to her face? One more time.

He keeps playing the sequence over and over.

She knows nothing – she knows everything. She knows everything – let's rewind – and she knows nothing again. A second was enough – she fell down a hundred yards, didn't she?

IAN Creep. Inept, miserable creep!

PETER Careful. They used to give me the toughest jobs. Once they sent me to spy on Havel.

IAN You brag about that, man?!

PETER I went to apologize to him at the Presidential Palace, but they wouldn't let me in. So I wrote to him... Dear Mr. President, please accept my apologies for spying on you on my supervisor's orders sixteen years ago. My name will not tell you anything but I am the guy who asked you for a match at the train station in the High Tatras. You were in a hurry so you gave me the whole box...

He pulls out a matchbox.

I still have it.

IAN Moving.

PETER What do you have? You got squat.

IAN I have a family. My wife will forgive me.

Hands Peter his cassette. He puts it into the video player. We can see a video of idyllic Christmas: Karin and Ian under the tree, their little son sitting on the floor next to them. Piles of presents, natural vivid noise, sparkles.

PETER These don't forgive.

IAN That's enough.

He wants to take out the cassette but Peter shoves him back into the armchair.

PETER Sit!

IAN How dare you?!

PETER You sit until I tell you!

Christmas scenes are fast-forwarded. Suddenly there is Eva in a bikini, now the tape plays normal speed. Eva is on the beach, dancing, stripping and laughing. Ocean waves are heard on tape as well as Ian's faint heckling from behind the camera.

IAN'S VOICE You're on! You're good... excellent... you're good... so great... yes...

They both watch Eva dance. Suddenly Peter attacks Ian and starts beating him. They are rolling on the floor.

PETER Look what you did to her!

IAN Let go of me, man!

PETER What do you think of yourself?! I used to beat up bigger fish than you! They were crawling on the floor spitting teeth! They begged me so much to let them go! I'm not scared of you, you're a nobody! A zero! You played God at the supermarket but now you're a nobody! I really admired you for a while. I thought you liked order, but you just kept firing girls depending on whether they'd spread for you. Not I, but you are a threat to this society! People will start hating the system because of the likes of you!

Lets Ian go.

Now go change your underwear.

IAN I'm not your prisoner, okay?

PETER *Looking at the frozen picture of Eva.*
Where can I find her?

IAN Go to hell!
Peter hits him.
I don't know! I've been looking for her for two weeks!

PETER Did you hurt her?!
Continues hitting Ian.

IAN You're crazy! Stop it!

PETER Did you hurt her?!

IAN She went out for a pack of cigarettes and never came back! I didn't do anything to her!
Peters brings two glasses and pours vodka for both of them.

PETER Have a shot.
Ian drinks under protest. Peter pours some more, they both drink.
She's been gone for two weeks?
Ian nods.
Once she was missing for six months. But then she stole something in Spain
and they quickly sent her back.
Ian is drinking.
She's my daughter.
Peter pours some more, they have another shot of vodka.
The older she gets the less I understand her. You know what she did once? We used to
have an old Russian bicycle. She fastened a rubber horn on it and took off the
chain. She went down the biggest hill and kept honking like the last trumpet.

IAN That's just like her.

PETER Broken arm, knocked-out teeth, ruptured spleen. And she was only ten.
They drink vodka. The frozen video frame is showing Eva at the beach.
She used to provoke teachers in school. She would wear the deepest cleavage. She left
home in a regular dress but put on a mini skirt before leaving the apartment
building. What am I saying – a miniskirt! It was more like a belt! Then they
would call me the from the principal's office, saying, comrade, do you know
what your daughter is wearing?! When the kids on the block started sniffing
glue, she had to be the first! She sniffed so that everyone would see her. You
know what kind of repercussions I had at work because of her?! All the things
I had to do because of her? Fuck, I wasn't doing it just because of the career! I
was doing it for the kid!
Pours more for Ian. He is getting drunk.
What are you afraid of, that I will get you drunk? That they will find your
corpse in a car? Other people specialized in accidents. I was just an ear. An ear
doesn't kill. Have a drink with the ear.
They have another shot of vodka.
Don't be afraid of me.

IAN I better go.

PETER Are you afraid of me?
Ian shakes his head no.
Yes, you are.

IAN I am not.

PETER You know why she was hooking in front of the supermarket? She wanted to humiliate her own father! She let me have it to the bitter end! From the storage room, I could see every single car that stopped by her.
He hugs Ian, pours more vodka, they drink up.
 Are you mad at me that I hit you? Give it to me straight, are you angry? Let's have the truth!
Ian carefully shakes his head no.
 How long did you last with her?

IAN Two months.
Peter extends his hand to Ian.

PETER You don't know how to shake hands?! Squeeze and look into the eye? You don't know that?!

IAN *Extends his hand and squeezes the palm.*
 Is this okay?

PETER Now listen.
Rummages through the cassettes. Finds one, puts it into the tape player, turns it on.
We can hear a child sing.
 First time she went to school. She was six and she wanted to be an actress. She asked me if actresses had to go to school too!

IAN An actress!
Something occurs to him and he runs away. Peter is drinking and talking to himself.

PETER It was a beautiful fall. I really believed everything would be alright. I believed the little girl will bring us back together with my wife... But nothing can divide a man and his wife more than their own child.

9. Casting Call

Eva enters the elevator.

FEMALE VOICE *From the speaker. Gong.*

Casting call for „Nina von Autobahn“ movie starts in five minutes in the banquet hall.
 Casting call for „Nina von Autobahn“ movie starts in five minutes in the banquet hall.

Gong. Ian gets on. Eva presses the button. The elevator starts moving.

IAN You really want to be an actress? Okay. Be it.

EVA You like actresses, don't you?

IAN I know one.

EVA Are you here with her?

IAN Why did you leave? I thought we could live next to each other.

EVA Next to each other, yes. Together, no.

IAN You disappear like a little brat. Did you come here to finish me off?!

EVA An agent who can't sell his own wife?

IAN I'm not her agent! I don't even live with her any more.

He presses the Stop button. The elevator stops.

Come back.

EVA Sorry, I have a casting call.

IAN Karin is divorcing me. She doesn't let me see my son! Now I don't have her and I don't have you either!

EVA I want a chance like the other girls.

IAN You really want to make movies?!

EVA Yes, I want to make movies.
 IAN You're not an actress, Eva.
 EVA It's about me.
 IAN You didn't sleep with the producer.
 EVA With Hermann? I blew a hair dryer into his ass for an hour. He told me I was the first woman to truly satisfy him.
 IAN Congratulations. So you're trying out the casting call.
 EVA You bet.
 IAN They're already looking forward to fresh meat. The director, cameraman, producer, they all want to see how low you can go.
 EVA What matters is what Hermann says.
 IAN It's his movie.
 EVA Hermann is a lucky man.
 IAN If the hair dryer in his ass comes on.
 EVA It will.
 IAN He's in love with the assistant cameraman.
 EVA It will come on, don't worry.
 IAN They already had an intimate dinner.
 EVA It will come on!
 IAN In that case Hermann will get all heated up, steam will be coming out of his ears, and those fingers that he stuck inside you... which fingers were those?
Eva takes off her shoe and shows her foot.
 He will point at you and say - Das ist sie!
He presses a button. The elevator starts moving.
 You can go to your casting call.
 EVA Would you like to be my agent?
 IAN I don't fix hair dryers.
 EVA *Hugs him.*
 I missed you.
Ding. Elevator stops.
 Are you coming with me?
Gets off the elevator. Suddenly she starts running and calls.
 EVA Hermann!!! Ich bin!
Ian, resigned, follows her.

x x x

Anna is wearing headphones like in a dubbing studio and is looking at the wall where a big screen video is being projected: Karin and Ian have a big fight, they throw objects at each other, beat each other. We cannot hear the sound of the fight. Anna is „dubbing“ both of them, lending her loving and understanding voice, which is in stark contrast with the revolting video.

ANNA *As Karin:*

It was a difficult period of time, Ian, but let's forget it.

As Ian:

I'm so glad you forgive me, Karin.

As Karin:

In a way, I am happy I didn't get the role. It's a B-movie.

As Ian:

You're right. Nina is a B-movie.

As Karin:

I don't have to act in that one.

As Ian:

I neglected you, honey, but that will change. I will spend much more time with the family.

As Karin:

You know I invited mom?

As Ian:

That's a great idea, sweetie!

As Karin:

She'll be staying with us.

As Ian:

You're so thoughtful! How come we didn't invite her a long time ago?

As Karin:

She'll help me with the baby.

As Ian:

And you can devote your time to making movies. You're my star. I heard Forman called you?

As Karin:

It was supposed to be a surprise.

As Ian:

I'm so happy! When mom is here, we'll open a nice bottle of wine... here she comes, I guess!

As Karin:

Mom!

The video is showing a big closeup of Karin's furious face. She is speaking to the camera, full of hatred. Anna is still „dubbing“ with her kind voice.

As Karin:

I'm so glad you came! I want to spend your last days with you, mom. We have so much to say to each other! Especially now that I know about all the things you sacrificed for me. Give me your hand.

Anna extends her hand. Karin's face in the video is full of hatred and tears.

I love you, mom.

Anna is holding her hand extended.

I love you so much.

Anna injects herself with a syringe and leaves. Video stops and Karin enters.

X X X

Karin is in her old apartment, packing her son's toys in a suitcase.

KARIN My son will never be an actor. He will do sports. Just for fun, to enjoy. I will not force him to do anything. And when a coach starts luring him into some junior team, I will personally knock the guy down the staircase!

Her cell phone rings, Karin lets it ring. Then she listens to the message. Beep.

IAN'S VOICE *From the cell phone.*

It's Ian. Karin, please... Don't send me messages through lawyers. Let's talk. I am available any time.

KARIN *Hangs up the cell phone. She keeps packing the toys into the suitcase.*

I'll buy him a computer so that he can play those games. Not all of them are violent. I saw a Chinese labyrinth. It had a little girl looking for diamonds. Pretty harmless. My son will be a computer programmer. He can do science, business or art design with a computer. And he can do sports in the meantime.

Cell phone rings, Karin lets it ring. Then she listens to the message. Beep.

IAN'S VOICE *From the cell phone.*

Shit, should I ritually cut off my dick?! What the hell do you want?! Sorry! Sorry!

KARIN *Hangs up the cell phone.*

No school plays at the prom. To make sure that he doesn't start enjoying it. Kids like to perform and then it stays with them for life. I saw so many talented kids burn out and I still don't know why. I saw many bullies and ugly girls, ignored during their childhood, how they seized the world as adults and changed it to their liking. It is embarrassing to turn thirty and find out it is the others who won.

Cell phone rings. Karin lets it ring. Then she listens to the message. Beep.

IAN'S VOICE *From the cell phone.*

Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry.

KARIN *Hangs up the cell phone.*

I want to leave here. As far as possible. I am getting a divorce, selling the place, leaving. Three great things. The best three things I ever did.

Cell phone rings. Karin lets it ring. Then she listens to the message. Beep.

IAN'S VOICE *From the cell phone.*

I bought thirty toy cars for the boy. The blue one like I drive, he likes that one the best. I will be sending them to him one by one. When you don't let him have one, another one will come. He will get one eventually.

KARIN *Hangs up the cell phone.*

Everyone tells me to stay. Like, why do I want to leave the country. Like, why do I want so start from scratch. That there may be nice people on the outside, but I will always be a stranger to them. That I should stay at home. Where is that... home?! This country has all my paperwork but I don't feel at home here.

Cell phone rings. Karin lets it ring. Then she listens to the message. Beep.

IAN'S VOICE *From the cell phone.*

Karin? I put Pete's voice on my cell. I click on SOUND, click on SET THE SOUND, click on MY SOUNDS, click on PETE. You can never take him away from me!

From the cell phone you can hear a child laugh. Karin listens for a moment, then she hangs up the cell phone and quietly leaves with the suitcases. After a while, a beep.

UNKNOWN VOICE Uhm... This is the university hospital. We found your number in a cell phone. Your husband was in a car accident. Can you call us?

x x x

Peter answering questions of reporters.

PETER What do I say about my daughter being in the movie? „Nina from the Highway?“ She was always so hard to handle. She put me and my wife through hell. What do I think of movies in general? I think they're overrated. Every idiot today puts out a CD, has his own talkshow and wants to be in the movies.

But I have nothing against that. These are the times. If you haven't been on TV, you don't exist. I don't really know Eva. I knew everything about her before she turned seven. Now I know nothing. She's definitely not your typical... you know... from the highway. She only did that for six months. Look, I'm not covering up for the fact that I used to be with the secret service. I was doing surveillance. Those were the times. Once I was watching Mr. Havel, they had a covert meeting in the Tatras, like, to get some fresh air. The whole train was full of our people! We had the conductors, even the waiters in the dining car. We knew everything about them, who was drinking what, who had ham and eggs at what time. Then he lit my cigarette at the train station and he didn't want his matchbox back. Something told me, Peter, keep it for later!

He pulls out a box of matches.

Now I'm glad we have democracy. That even average citizens have a chance now. That I, a former secret service man, am granting interviews to prestigious magazines. And that my daughter, a former prostitute, is an artist. That the fire that the dissidents started keeps all of us warm today, including the defeated and humiliated ones. That we're being counted on again. That our time is coming again.

10. Supermarket Hall

People entering with shopping carts. Pleasant muzak is coming out of the speakers. Ian and Eva, dressed in elegant clothes, enter.

IAN How does it feel to come back here as a star?

EVA When I see all those girls in red vests... wanna hurl!

IAN The reporters came up with the idea.

Hands her a red vest.

EVA No way!

IAN Just throw it over your dress.

EVA How will that look? I would need a pair of jeans and a t-shirt.

IAN *Pulls out a t-shirt and a pair of jeans.*

Then come back to the CD department.

EVA You're an idiot.

Eva leaves.

ANNA'S VOICE *From the speaker. Gong.*

Dear customers, today we are holding a video signing for the movie „Nina from the Highway“. The video cassettes will be signed by the lead character of this unconventional movie, a former employee of our supermarket. Together with the autograph you will also receive a fragrant gift from our sponsor, a splendid mouthwash! We look forward to seeing you in twenty minutes!

Peter enters, wearing a black suit of a secret service man. On his belt he has a gun, cuffs and pepper spray.

IAN You look like a cowboy!

PETER When people see the suit they steal less.

IAN Less?

PETER Almost not at all.

IAN People always steal. Things have to be stolen. It's a drive.

PETER You're telling me about drives.

IAN Self-preservation drive.

PETER Humor me me. How does a drive like that look?

IAN You can get it in the drugstore department. Liquid or gel.

ANNA'S VOICE *From the speakers. Gong.*
A special announcement for our customers! Please, give me your full attention.

IAN Still Anna?

PETER She signed herself out of the hospital.

ANNA'S VOICE *From the speakers.*
I am doing things for the last time. This is the last time I am speaking to you. From here I can see the chrome of your shopping carts glistening... it reminds me of sparkling snow in the mountains.

PETER *Into the walkie-talkie.*
Call a doctor.

ANNA'S VOICE *From the speakers.*
It sparkles like snow in Jesenin's poetry that I have not read out loud for at least twenty years...

IAN Stop her, okay?!

Peter runs off, Ian is on the phone.
It's Ian. Karin, please... Don't send me messages through lawyers. Let's talk. I am available any time.
Hangs up the cell phone.

ANNA'S VOICE *From the speakers.*
I have very little time left... so I will recite you some Jesenin... because poetry makes the time go slower...

PETER *Comes in.*
She locked herself in.

IAN You're the chief of security, aren't you? So do something!

PETER My boys are talking to her through the door.

IAN You want to listen to that poetry?!

PETER I can't talk her out of that.

IAN So put on music in every department.

PETER What kind of music?

IAN CD-players, TV sets. Vacuum cleaners. Make more noise than her.

PETER *Into the walkie-talkie.*
Blast the TV sets. And the vacuum cleaners! Everywhere!

ANNA'S VOICE *From the speakers.*
You can hear Jesenin in original Russian. In a moment, TV sets and blenders come on from different aisles.

IAN We have that video signing in a few moments, so do something, man. We can't do it in this noise!

PETER She locked herself in! You don't get it?

IAN Knock the door down.

PETER It's armores. It's the room with the safe.

IAN God help us.

ANNA'S VOICE *From the speakers.*
Jesenins poems.

IAN She's a lunatic like her daughter.

PETER It should have tipped me off. She told me this was her last day here.

IAN That's for sure, I guarantee that.

PETER We used to watch people who wrote poetry. Just for the hell of it, as prevention. Today people underestimate that.

A customer with a cart comes in.

CUSTOMER Excuse me, does it have to be so loud here?

PETER Please, bear with us. They're working on it.

CUSTOMER Is the boss here?

PETER We don't have a boss.

IAN I am the manager. How can I help you?

CUSTOMER At Christmas you play Silent Night three hundred times, you made me hate it. Do you want me to start hating Jesenin too?

IAN *To the customer, in confidence.*

You know, I shouldn't tell you, but... they are shooting an episode of Candid Camera, you understand?

The customer lights up, pats Ian on the back, looks around to spot the camera and leaves.

Ian calling Karin.

Karin! Karin, pick up! Shit, should I ritually cut off my dick?! What the hell do you want?! Sorry! Sorry!

Hangs up the cell phone. To Peter.

In a moment I'll be getting calls to the French dispatch that it's a mess here! I'm not going to lose my job because of you, man!

Ian walks around, nervous, and makes another call to Karin.

Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry.

Hangs up the cell phone, to Peter.

What are you looking at?!

PETER Are you alright?

IAN You deal with your mess!

ANNA'S VOICE *From the speakers.*

Jesenin's poems.

PETER *Runs off.*

I'm not going to lose my job because of that cow!

ANNA'S VOICE *From the speakers.*

Jesenin's poems.

IAN *Telefonuje Karin.*

I bought thirty toy cars for the boy. The blue one like I drive, he likes that one the best. I will be sending them to him one by one. When you don't let him have one, another one will come. He will get one eventually.

EVA *Comes in in jeans and a red vest, dressed like a store clerk.*

Are you calling her again?

IAN Never mind!

EVA What's up with you?!

IAN Sorry. This place irritates the hell out of me.

EVA That was your idiotic idea! I didn't want to come here!

IAN All of the TV stations sent their crews!

EVA I'm not going to shit in my pants because of that!

IAN We'll do a couple of interviews, you sign a bunch of videos and we're out of here.

The TV sets, blenders are getting quiet, the entire noise blanket dies down.

ANNA'S VOICE *From the speakers.*

Jesenin's poems.

EVA Is this some kind of marketing gimmick?

IAN My mother-in-law? Her entire life is in marketing.

EVA *Rips off her red vest.*
Your family is everywhere!

IAN She's no longer my family!

EVA Sign your videos yourself.

IAN Eva! You have to be there!

EVA The only thing I have to do is to have a smoke!
She starts smoking.

ANNA'S VOICE *From the speakers.*
Jesenin's poems.
Laughter of customers, applause.

IAN They like it. Maybe it's not going to be such a disaster.
A group of customers passes by, lead by a man that Ian talked to, looking for the hidden camera.

EVA You're such bastards. You will profit even from human suffering.

IAN What do I have to do with this?!

EVA Leave me alone! I may come back in a moment, but leave me alone now! I don't want to see anybody!
She leaves.

IAN *Makes a call.*
Karin? I put Pete's voice on my cell. I click on SOUND, click on SET THE SOUND, click on MY SOUNDS, click on PETE. You can never take him away from me!
You can hear a child laugh on the phone. He hangs up the cell phone.

ANNA'S VOICE *From the speakers.*
Anna, I... love you... I love you...
Customers applaud.

IAN It's getting better, isn't it?

PETER *Enters. Talking into the walkie-talkie.*
Turn her power off...

IAN Shouldn't we let her?

PETER Are you missing a screw too?
Into the walkie-talkie.
What do you mean you can't?! Turn it off! The switchboard in the office! Not the main switchboard! Just the office! Immediately!

IAN That will be a mess...

PETER Only the offices will be out.
Into the walkie-talkie.
Yes, you heard me right!

IAN You want to turn off the power?

PETER Just the upstairs.
Sharp darkness. Screams of fear.

IAN What are they doing? Put on the lights!

PETER *Into the walkie-talkie.*
Not the main switchboard, you idiot! Turn it back on! Turn it on!

IAN How come the emergency lights did not kick in?!

PETER *Hissing of the walkie-talkie.*
Department three, people leaving without paying! No way! I'm going to kill you! Put on the lights! Yes! Put on the main switchboard!

People starting to panic. Some people are starting to loot, putting things into their shopping carts. The store clerks are trying to prevent them from doing that but they are falling down. Chaos.

Guards, get to the doors! They want to escape through the fire exits!

Listening to the walkie-talkie.

Looting in the electronics department?! Close the doors!

IAN Line up everybody by the doors and turn the power back on!

PETER Let's go to the electronics.

Runs off together with Ian. Panic is getting stronger. Suddenly the lights come back on and the looters stop in their tracks. They put the things back and run off.

ANNA'S VOICE *You can hear her again from the speakers.*

Stop... please. Stop! Please!

Shopping carts fly off from the side and they crash into each other. Gong sounds three times. Anna's voice storms with unexpected strength.

Get bent!!!

The noise of panic gradually dies down. People start returning things from their carts back on the shelves. Eva comes in, holding a twenty-pound package of frozen french fries. It is leisurely hidden under her t-shirt. Chaos is calming down.

I apologize for my words, my dears... pick up the carts that got knocked over... find your children... I can see you... from your side it looks like a mirror but it is a window from here...

People are calming down.

Thank you...

Peter comes in, talking into the walkie-talkie.

PETER We handled the situation, boys! They are drilling the lock as we speak.

The sound of the door broken into comes from the speaker. Anna screams, mike screeches, then silence.

Good job! Put her in an ambulance right away!

Notices Eva.

PETER Eva...

EVA What do you want?!

PETER What if we started with a clean slate?

EVA Have you forgotten how you kicked me out of here?

PETER And did you forget about who ordered me to do so?!

EVA You were afraid to talk to me so that no one would find out we're family. Companies don't like to employ relatives. They steal more than others. They can conspire.

But not us. We were never able to agree on anything.

She wants to leave.

PETER What have you got there?

EVA *She shows him the french fries.*

I'm stealing, okay?

PETER What do you mean, stealing?

EVA Actresses steal, haven't you read that? In Hollywood they steal jewelry, here we steal french fries. This film is crap. The whole "Nina from the Highway" thing. A scandal should help it.

PETER Come back home. I painted your room.

EVA *Bursts into laughter.*

Did you leave the poster of Madonna?

IAN'S VOICE *From the speaker. Gong.*

Dear customers, we apologize for a momentary indisposition of our announcer. To make it up to you we offer you a ten per cent discount on any one item of your choice. This offer is extended only to the customers that are inside the supermarket at this moment.

Gong. Applause and happy noises from the crowd.

EVA I hope we'll never see each other again.

PETER *Takes the french fries away from her.*
Listen to me!

EVA Give it to me!

PETER Listen to me at least this one time!

EVA *Pulls out a screwdriver.*
Look. I take what I see. Why are you even here?!
She pulls out a flashlight. It does not work. She throws it at Peter.
Piece of junk.
Pulls out soap, warm socks, toothbrushes from her pockets. She throws everything at Peter.
I stole some stuff, didn't I? Catch! Soap with coenzyme, anti-stress socks, aerodynamic toothbrush!

PETER Don't get yourself locked up because of stupid little things.

EVA Will you tell on me? Like you told on mom? Because she was writing to her brother in Munich?!

PETER I never told on her!

EVA I don't believe you.

PETER I swear! I was at work when they called me that she was writing to an emigrant, an enemy of state, it wasn't me, shit, I was put on menial jobs for a month, I barely made it back!

EVA She poisoned herself in the store because of you!

PETER She had a stroke!

EVA She poisoned herself with gas! They found her by the gas heater that was on! You think I'm stupid?! Strangers had to bury her because you were off on your job!

PETER You know who I was watching?!

He rattles the matchbox.

EVA You lie even to the papers. You bought that matchbox in a newspaper stand across the street!
Peter slaps her face.
Is that all you can do?!
Peter slaps her face.
I was so ashamed in front of other kids that you were beating mom! Everybody knew that!

PETER I didn't want to hit you... look... we're both angry... I... well, fuck, I fucked up a couple of things!

IAN'S VOICE *Gong. From the speaker.*
Dear customers, in a moment we are starting a video signing in the book and video department for the video „Nina from the Highway“, which is a new release in our video stores today. We cordially invite you to come in!
They are pulling on the bag of french fries.

PETER We can be a family again!

EVA The only thing I want from you is the French fries!

PETER My dear Eva...
Eva tears the bag out of Peter's hands. Peter picks up the screwdriver.

Listen to me for once! Start accepting things the way they are! Why do you always have to provoke me?! You never knew when to stop, but now you seriously pissed me off!

Eva is holding the bag of french fries on her stomach as a shield.

And you leave this here, you hear me?! Put it down! You won't knock me down on my knees! You didn't do it when you were getting rides with all those men in front of my eyes and you won't do it today! I never beat you too much! I beat you too little! Fuck, listen to me and put it down right away!

Eva refuses. She is holding her bag.

You are stubborn like your mother!

Peter stabs the bag with the screwdriver. The plastic bag tears apart and frozen french fries pour out on the floor. The bag falls on the ground. Eva's t-shirt is showing a red stain. Blood is getting mixed with french fries. Eva is slowly sliding on the floor.

PETER *Kneels down and hugs her.*

My dear Eva... my little girl...

Ian runs in. Peter is hysterical.

She was blackmailing me! She stole a screwdriver and she was trying to kill me! She was furious, she was experiencing a heroin withdrawal! It was justified self-defense, any court will recognize that! Everyone can see she's a junkie!

IAN *Holding Eva's hand.*

It's going to be okay, you'll see...

Eva calls him with a gesture. Ian leans over her. She shows him her bloody stomach. The blood stain now spread like a ominous continent. She whispers something.

IAN What?

EVA It's not ticking... any more...

Closes her eyes.

IAN Don't move, honey...

PETER *Talking into the walkie-talkie.*

Call an ambulance. And put on some music! Does it have to be so quiet here?!

IAN I'll drive her myself!

Takes Eva in his arms.

Bear with me, honey, it's gonna be okay.

Peter helps him carry her into the car. Sound of a car disappearing in the distance. Beep.

x x x

Karin comes in with a small suitcase on wheels.

UNKNOWN VOICE *From the phone.*

Uhm... This is the university hospital. We found your number in a cell phone. Your husband was in a car accident. Can you call us?

FEMALE VOICE *Gong. From the speaker.*

Passengers traveling on flight 635 to Munich can start boarding through Gate C.
Passengers traveling on flight 635 to Munich can start boarding through Gate C.

Karin's phone rings.

UNKNOWN VOICE *From the phone.*

This is the university hospital. We operated on the guard and also on the girl, she is in stable condition. The driver was dead on arrival. Please come to the hospital as soon as possible. Are you there? Hello? Hello?

Karin hangs up the cell phone. She is sitting on her suitcase. Crowds of shoppers come with their carts and surround her completely.

VOICE

From the speaker.

Dear customers! We hope you have a pleasant shopping experience in our supermarket and we invite you for a tasting of a French bouillion in the deli section. We wish you a beautiful day!

Pleasant muzak is heard from the speakers. The carts surround Karin. She is sitting on her suitcase like on an island.

The End