

Simona Semenič:

YOU DIDN'T FORGET, YOU JUST DON'T REMEMBER ANYMORE

Dramatis personae:

LEON, 35 years

LUCIJA, 35 years

MATJAŽ, 61 years

Place:

A living room.

Time:

Scene 1 begins in the evening.

Ljubljana, 2007

Scene 1

The book.

Lucija enters.

LUCIJA: *(Puts the handbag on the shelf.)*

(Settles the handbag.)

(Takes off the coat.)

(Folds the coat.)

(Hangs up the coat.)

(Strokes the coat.)

(Takes the coat into the hands.)

(Folds the coat once again.)

(Hangs it up once again.)

(Strokes the coat.)

(Takes off the shoes.)

(Puts on the slippers.)

(Arranges the shoes.)

(Sets right the coat.)

(Settles the shoes.)

(Settles a pile of newspapers.)

(Leafs through the publicity catalogues.)

Matjaž enters.

LUCIJA: What took you so long?

(Kisses him.)

(Takes off his coat.)

MATJAŽ: My alleged "buddy" was at the store again. Jesus, he's worse than your aunt.

LUCIJA: *(Folds and hangs up the coat.)*

MATJAŽ: *(Takes off his shoes.)* There should be a treatment for verbal incontinence. Seriously.

LUCIJA: *(Arranges the shoes.)*

MATJAŽ: I would go to the pharmacy and get a box of pills, no, ten boxes, for this bore at the shop. He's impossible.

LUCIJA: And? Is there anything?

MATJAŽ: You won't believe this, yet again I had the privilege of hearing the man's family *anamnesis*, his entire treatment regimen, and, this time, listen to this, this time, he even made the effort of showing me the bubbles on his knees.

LUCIJA: *(Sweeps his sweater with her hand.)*

MATJAŽ: Thankfully, he considered it inappropriate to show me the ones on his ass. Those are supposed to itch the worst.

LUCIJA: (*Sets right his collar.*)

MATJAŽ: Maybe we should make the effort and introduce him to your aunt.

LUCIJA: Matjaž, the paper ...

MATJAŽ: I bet she'd want to catch a glimpse of the ass bubbles.

LUCIJA: Matjaž, the paper ...

MATJAŽ: Newspaper, sugar. You're such a purist in front of your scholars, and then you throw such terms at me. If one of your – what do you entitle them – one of your illiterate churls heard you, your authority would end immediately.

LUCIJA: And? Is there anything?

MATJAŽ: There's nothing, you see me coming without the paper.

LUCIJA: - newspaper –

MATJAŽ: They will deliver the evening edition in few minutes. I guess I'll have to confront the dermatitis down there once again. Maybe till then he'll somehow manage to liberate himself from his cordial bashfulness, he'll strip off his trousers and delight me with presentation of unique specimen of herpetimorphus dermatitis.

LUCIJA: It should be today. It's been five weeks.

MATJAŽ: Four. How could you forget?

LUCIJA: Anyway, enough time has passed. They should have published the review by now.

MATJAŽ: Essay, sugar. You know how sensitive the reviewers, pardon, I meant essayists, are. And besides, your lips take such a beautiful shape when you say a word essay.

LUCIJA: By all means, enough time has passed from the publication date. They should have published the essay by now. Shouldn't they?

MATJAŽ: How could you forget the publication date?

LUCIJA: (*Takes the publicity catalogue into her hands.*)

MATJAŽ: After that lavish reception your aunt organized for us. One would hope you'd remember a party like that.

LUCIJA: (*Gives him a severe look.*)

MATJAŽ: What? It wasn't lavish enough for you? All those sunflowers and whatever other organic flowers? Not to mention the organic menu. Lavish indeed. Where would we be without your aunt?

LUCIJA: (*Leafs through the catalogue.*)

MATJAŽ: I have nothing against her, she's a fine woman. Whenever I publish, she puts forth a real effort, more than my mother would have done, god rest her soul. –

LUCIJA: (*Leafs through the catalogue.*)

MATJAŽ: - And this despite the fact that she is conceivably the busiest woman on the planet. Sugar, if you are one-tenth as agile at her age, every day I will... No, three

times a day I will... Fuck, I won't, will I? When you're her age, I will have been six feet under for a while.

LUCIJA: Oh, take a look at this vase. We could put it there, at the corner.

MATJAŽ: And you'll be chasing young studs. –

LUCIJA: What do you think? Besides, the price is quite attractive.

MATJAŽ: - Just like your aunt. It would really be good to somehow introduce her to the bore at the store. They could talk to their withered little hearts' delight. No, come to think of it, it's a bad idea, they'd be "all talk". Fuck, bad idea.

LUCIJA: We'll have to do something about this corner. Shelves are not enough. Even though I think we ordered really good shelves.

MATJAŽ: But, you know, you have to give her credit where credit is due. Never has as pointed comment on the novel been given...

LUCIJA: And the price was quite attractive as well. But we'll have to replace that worker. This one is too dirty.

MATJAŽ: Even though, aunt Bertha was highly satisfied with him, wasn't she. Didn't she recommend him to you?

LUCIJA: Yes, but this doesn't change the fact that we are not satisfied with him. Does it?

MATJAŽ: If it hadn't been for aunt Bertha and her verbal diarrhea, I wouldn't be able to do this. (*Kisses her.*) And this. (*Kisses her.*)

LUCIJA: Well, what do you think then? This vase, here. But then we would have to purchase physalis alkekengi or eriophorum angustifolium.

MATJAŽ: And this. (*Kisses her.*) And this. (*Kisses her.*)

LUCIJA: Matjaž, you're not listening to me.

MATJAŽ: What? Would you like a further demonstration of all the wonderful things our dear aunt Bertha has enabled?

LUCIJA: I get the idea, thanks.

MATJAŽ: Sugar...

LUCIJA: Yes?

MATJAŽ: I love you.

LUCIJA: I know.

MATJAŽ: I owe her a deep debt of gratitude, you see.

LUCIJA: For what?

MATJAŽ: For you.

LUCIJA: Oh. Yes.

Silence.

MATJAŽ: What is it, sugar?

LUCIJA: What is what?

MATJAŽ: You seem distant. Are you tired?

LUCIJA: No.

MATJAŽ: What, then?

LUCIJA: (*Leafs through the catalogue.*) It's nothing. I'm just thinking about these things. I wish we don't make the same mistake as we did two years ago when we renovated. This time I would like us to arrange the apartment exactly as we want.

MATJAŽ: Come here.

LUCIJA: (*Takes a book on dry flowers off the shelf.*)

MATJAŽ: Sugar, you're ignoring me.

LUCIJA: I just have to check something. I don't know which alternative would suit better. Just a moment.

MATJAŽ: And you were so vivacious earlier. Not to say licentious.

LUCIJA: (*Puts the book down and looks at him.*)

MATJAŽ: Did you have a good time at dinner?

LUCIJA: Of course, why do you even have to ask. I always have a good time with you.

MATJAŽ: Me too.

LUCIJA: You always have a good time with yourself?

MATJAŽ: Precisely.

LUCIJA: How could you not.

MATJAŽ: Yes. With my verbal prowess...

LUCIJA: (*Leafs through the book.*)

MATJAŽ: With my prowess on the field of fleshly pleasures –

LUCIJA: Yes, this. This is exactly what I want.

MATJAŽ: - although not in extensions which were made possible by youthful vitality, but still –

LUCIJA: What do you think? This flower, *Sedum Spectabile*. And then, for example, *Lunaria Annu*. Maybe with the addition of, but really just a little bit, just for the touch – *Melica Ciliata*.

MATJAŽ: - very much with the vitality which is made possible by –

LUCIJA: Are you going to get the newspaper?

MATJAŽ: There is no hurry. Let's sit a while longer. We haven't had that pleasure in a long time. Remember how we used to sit here for hours?

LUCIJA: Yes.

MATJAŽ: How we enjoyed it?

LUCIJA: Mm.

MATJAŽ: What, you wouldn't say we enjoyed it?

LUCIJA: No, it's just ...

MATJAŽ: What, sugar?

LUCIJA: It's not...

MATJAŽ: There's obviously something.

LUCIJA: It seems so untidy here now. I would like us to finally finish with the renovation. So, that we can really enjoy after that.

MATJAŽ: Don't think about that now.

LUCIJA: Okay, but ...

MATJAŽ: What?

LUCIJA: You know I'm not capable of that.

MATJAŽ: Then don't think about anything at all. Pretend it's already done.

LUCIJA: You know that –

MATJAŽ: Come closer, I'll help you.

LUCIJA: (*Puts off the book on dry flowers.*)

MATJAŽ: Sugar ...

LUCIJA: I cannot enjoy in here. Really. I am sorry, but all I can see around are just imperfections that I have to work on. I cannot pretend, I'm not that kind of a person. I can't just - not think about this.

MATJAŽ: If you allow me to make hay while the sun shines by quoting our colleague playwright: There is no such thing as the way to happiness, the way itself is happiness.

LUCIJA: Let our colleague playwright with his Buddhism go and flies a kite. If you allow me to make hay while sun shines by paraphrasing my to revolutionary scholar.

MATJAŽ: You mean the one that's not your scholar any more?

LUCIJA: Yes.

MATJAŽ: Well, you were a bit hard on him, don't you think?

LUCIJA: Hard on him? Not at all. There is a limit to everything. A scholar cannot say to the professor to go and fly a kite. Not without consequences. No.

MATJAŽ: Sugar, this severity of yours stirs my blood. I would immediately do you ...

LUCIJA: Simply not acceptable. One has to stick to his principles.

MATJAŽ: Of course, sugar. I totally support your decision. You know that.

Long silence.

MATJAŽ: What are you thinking about now?

LUCIJA: Nothing really.

MATJAŽ: I can see through you so easily.

LUCIJA: It's nothing. Really.

MATJAŽ: I can tell. The corner of your lip is twitching.

LUCIJA: It's nothing like that. I was just thinking about this dream I had.

MATJAŽ: Not the film noir dream again?

LUCIJA: You were a werewolf.

MATJAŽ: Me? No. That's an interesting one. What happened? Did I tear you apart?

LUCIJA: No. Yes.

MATJAŽ: Did I or didn't I?

LUCIJA: It wasn't so bad.

MATJAŽ: I tore you apart but you enjoyed it, or what?

LUCIJA: No.

MATJAŽ: Then it was horrible.

LUCIJA: No. No. It was nice at first.

MATJAŽ: Werewolf bliss, then.

LUCIJA: Let me explain.

MATJAŽ: Well, explain it then.

LUCIJA: I will if you stop interrupting.

MATJAŽ: Sorry. Go ahead.

LUCIJA: It was nothing bad. It was nice at first. Really. It was horrible, but nice at the same time.

MATJAŽ: You did enjoy it then. Sorry. Go on.

LUCIJA: You were human at first but we both knew that you were a werewolf and that you would transform any minute. But we were in a sort of vacuum, floating, warm and gentle. It was wonderful. Then you said you had to leave. Through the window.

MATJAŽ: *(Smiles.)*

LUCIJA: I don't know why it had to be through the window. You were standing next to it, the window I mean, and you said: "I have to go." And I said: "Don't go yet, please. Stay a little longer." You said you couldn't, you weren't allowed to. And I knew you couldn't, that you weren't allowed to, that you would tear me to pieces if you didn't leave. But I wanted you to stay so badly. "Please, just a little while, just a little while." "I can't, I have to leave." We were arguing, holding hands, looking into each other's eyes, and you were standing next to the window, facing me. *(Pause.)* And then we ran out of time, you began to change and you were crying and you told me to run. But I couldn't run. And then you tore me to pieces.

MATJAŽ: Whoa.

LUCIJA: What do you think it means?

MATJAŽ: Well, we can safely assume that –

LUCIJA: No, please, don't start.

MATJAŽ: Don't start what?

LUCIJA: I can see through you, too. The way your eyebrows twitched. Spare me with your verbal prowess.

MATJAŽ: You really don't humor me anymore. It seems that all I have left in this world is Bertha.

LUCIJA: Well, she is the one who can tell what class is, when she sees it. Right?

MATJAŽ: *(Smiles.)*

LUCIJA: Please, go and get the newspaper, so that we can go to sleep.

MATJAŽ: After the dreams you had I'm definitely not going to let you sleep.

LUCIJA: Hurry up, please.

MATJAŽ: I'm on my way.

(Takes off his slippers, puts on the shoes.)

LUCIJA: *(Holds the coat for him.)*

MATJAŽ: *(Puts on the coat.)*

LUCIJA: *(Strokes the coat.)*

MATJAŽ: *(Kisses her, leaves.)*

LUCIJA: *(Closes the doors.)*

Scene 2

The book.

Leon stands in the room.

LEON: *(Watches Lucija.)*

LUCIJA: *(Sets right Matjaž's slippers.)*

(Settles the handbag.)

(Strokes the coat.)

(Takes off the coat.)

(Folds the coat.)

(Hangs up the coat.)

(Strokes the coat.)

(Arranges the shoes.)

(Sets right the coat.)

(Settles the shoes.)

(Settles a pile of newspapers.)

(Takes the publicity catalogue.)

(Turns around, sees Leon.)

(She is startled at seeing him.)

Tišina.

LUCIJA: Leon?

(Slowly puts the catalogue on the floor.)

(Comes close to him.)

Leon.

LEON: *(Smiles.)*

LUCIJA: It's you.

LEON: Yes.

LUCIJA: *(Touches him.)*

LUCIJA: It's really you.

LEON: *(Smiles.)*

LUCIJA: But what about... How did you... You cannot be here.

LEON: I came for a visit.

LUCIJA: I can't believe it. You came for a visit.

LEON: *(Smiles.)*

Silence.

LUCIJA: *(Looks towards the door.)*

(quieter) So, how did you manage to –

LEON: I broke in, what do you think?

LUCIJA: *(quietly)* Shhh. Matjaž will be here any second.

(Moves away from him.)

I think it would be better if...

LEON: If what?

LUCIJA: If you left.

LEON: *(Smiles.)*

LUCIJA: I mean it, Leon. Matjaž...

(Picks up the catalogue.)

Leon, I mean it.

LEON: I came for a visit.

LUCIJA: I really think you should leave our apartment.

LEON: *(Smiles.)*

LEON: And what if I don't?

LUCIJA: Go!

LEON: No.

LUCIJA: Leon!

LEON: I came for a visit.

LUCIJA: Not now. Matjaž is coming.

LEON: Now.

LUCIJA: Go away.

LEON: I'm not going.

LUCIJA: Leon... Leon, please. Please, go. Not now and not here. I don't want you to be here when he arrives.

LEON: You know what? I don't care.

LUCIJA: Please.

Silence.

LUCIJA: You won't budge, will you?

Silence.

LUCIJA: Get in there and wait.

LEON: *(Smiles.)*

LUCIJA: It's really you. How long have you been here?

LEON: Years, feels like.

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)* In that case you can wait a little longer.

LEON: *(Goes.)*

Scene 3

The book.

LUCIJA: (*Puts the catalogue on the top of the pile.*)

(Arranges the shoes.)

(Settles the handbag.)

(Strokes the coat.)

(Takes off the coat.)

(Folds the coat.)

(Hangs up the coat.)

(Strokes the coat.)

(Arranges the shoes.)

(Sets right the coat.)

(Settles the shoes.)

(Settles a pile of newspapers.)

Matjaž enters with an evening paper in his hand.

MATJAŽ: This one is really unbelievable. Jesus, aunt Bertha cannot be compared to him at all. Comparing to him aunt Bertha is a paragon of humbleness and taciturnity. This bore at the shop is simply unbearable.

LUCIJA: (*Kisses Matjaž.*)

MATJAŽ: No, no, when it comes to this grotesque of a human being, the term verbal diarrhea gets entirely different connotations. And at least one or two of them has something to do with the aggression.

LUCIJA: (*Takes off his coat.*)

MATJAŽ: And sugar, not just with the aggression coming from him, but with the aggression he awakes in the listener.

LUCIJA: (*Folds and hangs up the coat.*)

MATJAŽ: (*Takes off his shoes.*) There should be a treatment for verbal incontinence. Seriously.

LUCIJA: (*Arranges the shoes.*)

MATJAŽ: In cases like this one, one starts questioning the cruelty of genocide. Fuck, a specimen like this one literally turns a person into a beast.

LUCIJA: And? Is there anything?

MATJAŽ: He explained to me everything about herpetimorphus dermatitis for the second time this evening. Do I need this?

LUCIJA: (*Sweeps his sweater with her hand.*)

MATJAŽ: And he really, he really wanted to show me the bubbles on his ass. How is it possible that one thinks, that whoever in this world is interested in the ass bubbles of the bore from the shop?

LUCIJA: (*Sets right his collar.*)

MATJAŽ: Well, considering the fact that aunt Bertha has similar difficulties with her – what is it?

LUCIJA: Serborical dermatitis.

MATJAŽ: Yes, taking this in consideration, them two could really get along. The bubbles would keep turning up on new spots and they would actually never be bored.

LUCIJA: And? Is there anything?

MATJAŽ: I guess Bertha would be most interested in those on the ass.

LUCIJA: Matjaž, newspaper ...

MATJAŽ: There's nothing. I've already checked.

Silence.

MATJAŽ: Are you disappointed?

LUCIJA: What?

MATJAŽ: About the review?

LUCIJA: I don't know. Yes. Aren't you?

MATJAŽ: Disappointed isn't the right word. No, I can't say I'm disappointed. I did think it would be printed today. Otherwise, I wouldn't have risked my life by going outside to buy a newspaper from that walking dermatitis of a person. Dealing with the likes of him can be fatal at my age.

LUCIJA: So it's all the same to you?

MATJAŽ: Essentially, yes. It's all the same to me. It is what it is. Maybe the review won't be out for another month, who knows. But one should not beat oneself up about it. It will come when it comes. Things are in god's hands now. If it is at all possible for god to have something as prosaic as hands. What would he need them for, anyway? Wiping his ass?

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)*

MATJAŽ: Do it again.

LUCIJA: Do what?

MATJAŽ: Smile.

LUCIJA: So you can get high on it, or what?

MATJAŽ: Mmm-hm.

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)*

MATJAŽ: You see, sugar, that's all I need. Fuck reviews. They're not good for anything except toilet paper... Well, you see, it's all come full circle. God's hands and all that.

LUCIJA: Matjaž, you're boring.

MATJAŽ: Humor me a bit. I don't have much time left.

LUCIJA: Matjaž, stop it, all right? I can tell you're annoyed that the review hasn't come out yet. Well? Aren't you?

MATJAŽ: Well, maybe I am, a bit.

LUCIJA: Does this mean that "You didn't forget, you just don't remember any more" is a bad novel?

MATJAŽ: "More." The title is "More."

LUCIJA: Yes, I'm sorry. "More."

MATJAŽ: You could at least remember the title for once.

LUCIJA: Sorry.

MATJAŽ: You could at least invest that much.

LUCIJA: It was just a slip of a tongue, Matjaž.

MATJAŽ: It's always just a slip of a tongue.

LUCIJA: Matjaž, come on ...

MATJAŽ: I don't understand, how you can not remember those four little letters.

LUCIJA: It's only a title. Who cares about titles?

MATJAŽ: It's not just about the title, sugar.

LUCIJA: Matjaž, don't make it complicated, please.

MATJAŽ: I am not making it complicated. It's not just about the title.

LUCIJA: Matjaž ...

MATJAŽ: It's about the fact that ...

LUCIJA: I'm sorry.

MATJAŽ: It's about the fact that ...

LUCIJA: It was just a slip.

MATJAŽ: Sure, a slip of a tongue. That's fine. But ... Sugar, I do understand that you consider your suggestion better, and that perhaps you have gotten used to thinking about it that way, but ... Did we not have this discussion? Did I not explain to you why the title had to be "More"? I understand, it's just a mistake, albeit one that you seem to make over and over again, but ... Can't you try to understand me, too?

LUCIJA: Yes.

MATJAŽ: Don't you think it would be fair?

LUCIJA: Yes. Matjaž ...

MATJAŽ: Fair to both of us?

LUCIJA: Matjaž ...

MATJAŽ: Do you think I don't care? That my wife – and my wife only – seems not to know what it is I do. Jesus, some things do matter. Do you think I don't care? *You* obviously don't.

LUCIJA: Stop being stupid, Matjaž. I said I was sorry, it was a slip of the tongue. You know very well that I care. Stop it.

MATJAŽ: Again. "Stop it." Everything seems to end with "Matjaž, stop it," lately. And I shouldn't say what I see right in front of me? That you don't care?

LUCIJA: Well, it's not that I don't care at all. I at least read the thing, didn't I?

MATJAŽ: Yes, at least you did that.

Silence.

MATJAŽ: And you know, by no means does this have anything whatsoever to do with the quality of the novel. As a rule, the time gap between the event and the publication is proportional only to economic parameters, so considering the fact that the event is that of the release of the novel and the publication is that of the review – where the economic parameters are so to speak nil – one can rightfully conclude that the publication of the review is a matter of ... well ... coincidence.

LUCIJA: You kind of really blew this hypothesis, didn't you?

MATJAŽ: Is a matter of... Fuck, I just have to live with it. Even up here things aren't what they used to be.

LUCIJA: Still, it's too bad it didn't come out today.

MATJAŽ: Yes, it's disappointing. Now, that we finally had some time to celebrate together.

LUCIJA: Now that you had some time.

MATJAŽ: Now that we took the time.

LUCIJA: Now that we took the time.

Silence.

MATJAŽ: However, reviews –

LUCIJA: - essays –

MATJAŽ: - don't matter so much. Not that I wouldn't care at all, but ... I can't say that it isn't pleasant to read a good review, yes. It is a great feeling. But as one gets older and wiser... What I wanted to say is – what matters is that the people I really appreciate were thrilled with the novel and that's enough for me.

LUCIJA: Yes. I'm happy for you as well.

MATJAŽ: And by the way, they were ecstatic about the title. Supposedly it hits the nail on the head.

LUCIJA: Yes, you came up with an excellent title. The people you appreciate so much probably wouldn't be so impressed with the one I suggested.

MATJAŽ: You appreciate them too, if I'm not mistaken.

LUCIJA: Sure.

MATJAŽ: If you really want to know, yes. That option was considered sentimental. Banal.

LUCIJA: Banal. Great. I like it. It strikes me as a perfect characterization of its author. It hits the nail on the head. So to speak.

MATJAŽ: Yes, it does, doesn't it? I might finally have to come to terms with the fact that I have a banal wife.

LUCIJA: Yes. She is young and beautiful, though.

MATJAŽ: That she is. Young and beautiful.

Silence.

MATJAŽ: That... Besides her family of the first rank.

Silence.

MATJAŽ: Sugar ...

(Caresses her cheek.)

(Kisses her hair.)

We should go out here and there. Spoil ourselves a little.

LUCIJA: But we never take the time.

MATJAŽ: Yes. We will make an effort from now on.

LUCIJA: *(Begins to leaf through the newspaper.)*

It's here, right here. Look, it's here! "Matjaž Miller's More." Right here!

(Reading in silence.)

No.

MATJAŽ: What?

LUCIJA: *(Reading in silence.)*

No.

(Reading in silence.)

No.

MATJAŽ: *(Smiles.)*

LUCIJA: *(Stops reading.)*

MATJAŽ: Well?

LUCIJA: Hold on a minute.

(Reading in silence.)

No.

(Stops reading.)

I can't believe it.

MATJAŽ: Well?

LUCIJA: Listen. The title is "A lavish gift of pure and unpretentious beauty." You hear? "A lavish gift of pure and unpretentious beauty". What a melodious formulation.

(She is reading in a murmuring way.)

"... the movingly rendered relationship between the two protagonists ..."

(She is reading in a murmuring way.) ... "... their uncompromising

purity and the hardship that necessarily arises from it..." This sentence is a bit clumsy, but anyhow.

(She is reading in a murmuring way.)

MATJAŽ: Let me see.

LUCIJA: Wait. ...

(She is reading in a murmuring way.)

"...the powerful sensibility of the author ..."

(She is reading in a murmuring way.)

"a synthesis of the author's sophisticated voice and" Comma missing.

(She is reading in a murmuring way.) ... "... a qualitative surplus ..."

MATJAŽ: Come on, let me see.

LUCIJA: I'm reading it to you.

(She is reading in a murmuring way.)

"... reflects the corrosive nature of capitalism and points to a critique of the banality of our civil society, which permeates Miller's novel ..."

(She is reading in a murmuring way.)

I can't believe it. Here, look. Look at this.

(Gives the newspaper to him.)

MATJAŽ: *(Reading silently.)*

LUCIJA: I can't believe it. "A lavish gift of" ... What was it again?

MATJAŽ: *(Reading silently.)*

LUCIJA: Yes, "pure and unpretentious beauty" ... "a synthesis of the author's sophisticated voice and" ... What was it?

MATJAŽ: *(Reading silently.)*

LUCIJA: I can't believe it.

MATJAŽ: Listen to this: "the author already indicated this direction in his early works ..." *(Reading silently.)*

LUCIJA: I can't believe it. Such praise.

MATJAŽ: "... however, he has taken distance from such issues in his mature work..." Well. I wouldn't agree with that part.

(Reading silently.)

"...his collection of essays can and should be considered the peak of his *oeuvre* ..."

(Reading silently.)

"... which set new criteria for contemporary essay-writing..." New criteria. How about that.

(Reading silently.)

LUCIJA: What was it again? "A lavish gift of pure and unpretentious beauty". Right. Really good formulation.

MATJAŽ: "... the strength of the author's brave and idiosyncratic voice can best be seen in his choice of title ..."

(Reading silently.)

"... 'more' as rallying cry of consumer society; thus, it is the cover itself, crying out from the shelf of the big-box bookstore that reflects the very corrosiveness ..."

(Reading silently.)

(Stops reading.)

LUCIJA: Incredible, huh?

MATJAŽ: Well. Yes.

LUCIJA: This is really incredible. I never thought... Such praise. Let me read it again.

MATJAŽ: It is really something. Though, I did expect something along those lines.

LUCIJA: When the manuscript was finished, you weren't so sure.

MATJAŽ: I knew.

LUCIJA: (*Reading silently.*)

Listen. "...their uncompromising purity and the hardship that necessarily arises from it ...". And you were so afraid that no one would get it. You see now?

(*Reading silently.*)

"...possessing uniquely trenchant sensibility..." And you were worried it was sentimental.

(*Reading silently.*)

MATJAŽ: New criteria. How about that one.

LUCIJA: Oh, Matjaž, this is ...

MATJAŽ: Terrific.

LUCIJA: Yes. The dinner, then this. You must have timed it. You did, didn't you? Did you know it was going to come out today?

MATJAŽ: I didn't.

LUCIJA: You must have known. Matjaž, you knew it.

MATJAŽ: Come on, it's just a review.

LUCIJA: You knew it. I know you knew.

MATJAŽ: You think I would carefully consider how I would lie to you, and then all this? I had no idea.

LUCIJA: You did, too. I know you did.

MATJAŽ: I did not.

LUCIJA: Come on, admit it. Admit it.

MATJAŽ: Can you please be a little less exultant? You're ridiculous.

LUCIJA: (*Pause.*) Banal.

MATJAŽ: (*Pause.*) But young, and beautiful.

Silence.

MATJAŽ: That was a decently written review.

LUCIJA: Although it lays it on a little thick. Tends to make it a bit banal. Don't you think?

MATJAŽ: Sure. Your aunt Bertha will be thrilled, though.

Silence.

MATJAŽ: Sugar, what if we celebrate this. Tomorrow. Spoil ourselves a little. Fuck, you don't get a review like this every day. What do you think?

LUCIJA: We're having a dinner party tomorrow.

MATJAŽ: What dinner party?

LUCIJA: It's your daughter's birthday.

MATJAŽ: Oh yes. I completely forgot.

LUCIJA: Have you already decided what to get her?

MATJAŽ: No idea.

LUCIJA: What is her mom giving her?
MATJAŽ: She doesn't know yet. But it's easier for her.
LUCIJA: Why don't you ask her then?
MATJAŽ: I have asked her.
LUCIJA: And?
MATJAŽ: Nothing.
LUCIJA: Well, she must have said something.
MATJAŽ: Sunglasses.
LUCIJA: Well?
MATJAŽ: Oh please, I'm not choosing sunglasses for her. Fuck, I don't want to give them the pleasure. I refuse to be their laughingstock again. Like when I spent a fortune on that damn coat. No.
LUCIJA: What'll you do then?
MATJAŽ: Perhaps aunt Bertha could help me choose a treat of some sort.
LUCIJA: What'll you do then?
MATJAŽ: I don't know... It's getting harder and harder to pick stuff out for her... What did you want at 27?
LUCIJA: You. If I remember correctly.
MATJAŽ: Come on, use your head.
LUCIJA: You know very well that I can't do that.
MATJAŽ: You're not capable of it. I know.
Silence.
MATJAŽ: Sugar ...
LUCIJA: Mmm?
MATJAŽ: *(Smiles.)*
LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)*
MATJAŽ: Come here.
LUCIJA: What?
MATJAŽ: Come here.
LUCIJA: Why?
MATJAŽ: Come.
LUCIJA: To my little boy?
MATJAŽ: To your little boy.
LUCIJA: Now?
MATJAŽ: Yes.
LUCIJA: Right now?
MATJAŽ: Yes.
LUCIJA: What if I'd rather not?
MATJAŽ: Come on.
LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)* I'd rather not.

MATJAŽ: (*Smiles.*) You'd rather not?

LUCIJA: (*Smiles.*) I'd rather not.

MATJAŽ: Cuddle your little boy?

LUCIJA: (*Smiles.*) Come.

They leave.

Leon watches after them.

Scene 4

Leon. The book.

Leon.

Silence.

LUCIJA: You're still here.

LEON: (*Smiles.*)

LUCIJA: I had to ...

LEON: Yes.

Silence.

LUCIJA: You broke in.

LEON: Yes.

LUCIJA: And now?

LEON: Nothing. I'm here now.

LUCIJA: Back again.

LEON: Yes.

Silence.

LUCIJA: I still can't believe it.

Silence.

LUCIJA: You know, how long ... You're not really here.

LEON: I came for a visit.

LUCIJA: You came for a visit.

LEON: Yes.

Silence.

LEON: You cut your hair.

LUCIJA: Yes. A long time ago.

LEON: And you dyed it too, right?

LUCIJA: Yes. Right.

LEON: You're different.

LUCIJA: About nine years older?

LEON: Yes, something like that. But it only looks like eight.

LUCIJA: You haven't changed at all.

LEON: You're still beautiful.

LUCIJA: And young.

LEON: What?

LUCIJA: Nothing.

LEON: Yes.

Silence.

LUCIJA: You know how long it's been?

LEON: I know.

LUCIJA: You know what –

LEON: I know. I know everything.

Silence.

LUCIJA: I missed you.

LEON: I missed you too.

LUCIJA: Well, then that explains why you came back so soon.

LEON: Yes. Everybody else stayed, and I came back. Just because of you.

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)*

LEON: *(Smiles.)*

LEON: I wanted to bring those chocolate truffles from Castra.

LUCIJA: Castra closed.

LEON: Yes. That's why ...

LUCIJA: But you didn't know that.

LEON: No, I didn't know that.

LUCIJA: So you don't actually know everything?

LEON: No. Not everything.

LUCIJA: You know, I don't eat truffles anymore.

LEON: You're fucking with me.

LUCIJA: No, really, I don't eat them.

LEON: YOU don't eat chocolate truffles?

LUCIJA: No.

LEON: Uh. And why is that?

LUCIJA: I don't feel like eating them.

LEON: You don't feel like eating them?

LUCIJA: Yes. And besides...

LEON: What?

LUCIJA: Junk and all that. You know.

LEON: What do you mean, junk?

LUCIJA: In the truffles. They just fill you with junk and they make you fat and...

LEON: Actually, you look kind of emaciated.

LUCIJA: No, no. I didn't stop eating them to lose weight. They're full of junk. As one gets older and wiser... Well, these days I'm careful about what I put into my mouth.

LEON: You're still ridiculous.

LUCIJA: What is that supposed to mean?

LEON: Well, these weird rules of yours. Junk in chocolate truffles. Come on. You probably came up with that when you overstuffed yourself with them and kept throwing up.

LUCIJA: You mean that night after the movies?

LEON: Yes.

LUCIJA: Then I was throwing up because they were bad.

LEON: No, Lučka. You overstuffed yourself.

LUCIJA: No, they were bad.
LEON: No. You overstuffed yourself.
LUCIJA: They were bad.
LEON: Oink, oink.
LUCIJA: Stop it.
LEON: Oink, oink.
LUCIJA: I'm not a pig.
LEON: Yes, you are.
LUCIJA: It was you who bought them.
LEON: So it's my fault, then.
LUCIJA: Yes. You went and bought them.
LEON: So you admit that you overstuffed yourself?
LUCIJA: Anyway. Your fault.
LEON: Oink, oink.
LUCIJA: So, you didn't bring me anything?
LEON: No. But I can recite some beautiful poetry for you.
LUCIJA: (*Laughs.*) You can recite only one verse.
LEON: Well, yes.
LUCIJA: (*Laughs.*) Or have you learned some new poetry there?
LEON: (*Smiles.*)
LUCIJA: Or at least something new? Or you still do old tricks? Boxes in front of the doors and that?
LEON: Come on, that was something completely different.
LUCIJA: Well, I don't know.
LEON: No, no. That was a matter of principles.
LUCIJA: Well, maybe, I don't know.
LEON: He really was an asshole.
LUCIJA: Totally.
LEON: We were right.
LUCIJA: Well, yes.
They both laugh.
LUCIJA: Although it was pretty disgusting. If you think about it...
They both laugh.
LEON: Well, a little.
They laugh.
LEON: But it was worth it.
LUCIJA: Well, it was. Kind of.
LEON: When he opened the box ...
LUCIJA laughs.
LUCIJA: Come on, stop.

LEON: And when he unwrapped it...

LUCIJA: Come on, stop, will you ...

LEON: And when he put the hand in ...

Leon laughs.

LUCIJA: Stop it, stop it.

Lucija laughs.

LUCIJA: It was really disgusting.

LEON: It was your idea.

LUCIJA: Sure, but the turd was yours.

LEON: Come on, I didn't want to do it at first.

LUCIJA: What are you talking about? Of course you did.

LEON: Well, yes. I did. But ...

LUCIJA: But what? You put the box in front of his door. And I know you enjoyed it.

LEON: Sure, but I still thought you were overreacting.

LUCIJA: Well, I probably did a little. At that time I thought it was about right.

LEON: He was a royal asshole.

LUCIJA: Okay, but still we didn't have to ...

LEON: We didn't have a choice, did we?

LUCIJA: No, but ... When I think about it now ... It wasn't really ... You know.

LEON: Somebody had to do something.

LUCIJA: Well...

LEON: Well what? Of course somebody had to do something. Because of assholes like him everything is fucked up. Right?

LUCIJA: Yes, Leon, but ...

LEON: No buts. You know that. You said it yourself. Something had to be done. Somebody had to do something. Even, if it was stupid. At the time it didn't seem stupid.

LUCIJA: I don't know. We didn't have to. And we didn't achieve anything. He's still torturing students, it didn't do any good at all.

LEON: That's not the issue. We at least did something. Doesn't that matter?

LUCIJA: Well, back then it mattered. But actually it doesn't. It doesn't actually matter at all.

LEON: At all?

LUCIJA: Yes.

LEON: Don't you think that things would have been different if we didn't do it?

LUCIJA: No. Different how?

LEON: You and me.

LUCIJA: If we were different?

LEON: Yes.

LUCIJA: How different?

LEON: Well, I don't know. Different. Could you look at yourself in the mirror, if we didn't give the old jerk what he deserved?

LUCIJA: Come on, Leon. I don't know. Probably.

LEON: Well, then it really didn't matter.

LUCIJA: (*Smiles.*)

LEON: What did you call him?

LUCIJA: Wait ... What was it?

LEON: Come on, what did you call him?

LUCIJA: Wait ... I don't remember.

LEON: A stale ...

LUCIJA: I don't know. I forgot.

LEON: A stale old capitalist whore. There. You called him a stale old capitalist whore.

LUCIJA: That's it. That's what I called him, yes.

Silence.

LUCIJA: You haven't changed.

LEON: I wish I could say the same for you.

LUCIJA: (*Smiles.*) I'm a little older, right?

LEON: Yes. But it's not just that.

LUCIJA: What do you mean?

LEON: I don't know, it's weird.

LUCIJA: What?

LEON: You.

LUCIJA: Why do you say that?

LEON: I don't know. You're different.

LUCIJA: Different how? What do you mean by that?

LEON: Like I said. Different.

LUCIJA: Yes. I'm older.

LEON: It's not that.

LUCIJA: Then what is it?

LEON: It's like it's not really you.

LUCIJA: Come on, Leon.

LEON: I just don't understand.

LUCIJA: Well, what don't you understand?

LEON: You. What you're like.

LUCIJA: What am I like?

LEON: Yes.

LUCIJA: What *am* I like?

LEON: Listen to yourself.

LUCIJA: What?

LEON: Everything. Everything you're saying to me. You're different. It's not you.

LUCIJA: Leon, please ...

LEON: You're okay with this?

LUCIJA: With *what*?

LEON: This, for instance. That we have to talk in order to understand each other.

LUCIJA: So what?

LEON: Have you forgotten already? That we didn't have to talk. That we used to understand each other without speaking.

LUCIJA: I haven't –

LEON: It's gone now. You are lost.

LUCIJA: Lost?

LEON: Yes.

LUCIJA: / am lost? Leon, you're the one who –

LEON: Look at yourself. Look around you.

LUCIJA: What should I look at?

LEON: This house, for example. This cold, ugly house. You wouldn't live here.

LUCIJA: This is my home, Leon.

LEON: No. This is his home.

LUCIJA: Yes, his and mine. Ours.

LEON: His.

LEON: I really don't understand this.

LUCIJA: What don't you understand?

LEON: You with him. The way you are. That.

LUCIJA: What the hell are you talking about?

LEON: That. That you two are...

LUCIJA: What?

LEON: That you two aren't...

LUCIJA: What?

LEON: Have you always cared about each other so much?

LUCIJA: What?

LEON: If you've always cared about each other so much. You and the geezer. That was my question.

LUCIJA: (*Smiles.*)

LEON: What happened to you? You, who never settled for the crap. How could you settle for this? LUCIJA: Leon, stop this. What do you want, what did you come here for?

LEON: You.

LUCIJA: Me?

LEON: Yes.

LUCIJA: And now?

Silence.

LEON: (*Points at the book.*) That.

LUCIJA: What about it?

LEON: Why did you do it?

LUCIJA: What?

LEON: The thing with that. (*Points at the book.*)

LUCIJA: What did I do?

LEON: Don't play dumb.

LUCIJA: Stop it.

LEON: How could you? Did he make you do it?

LUCIJA: Come on, Leon, stop.

LEON: How did he make you do it?

LUCIJA: He didn't make me do it.

LEON: You would never have done it yourself.

LUCIJA: I did do it.

LEON: Impossible. Not you.

LUCIJA: Me.

LEON: What has he done to you?

LUCIJA: Nothing.

LEON: Lučka, talk to me.

LUCIJA: I am ...

LEON: Talk to me.

LUCIJA: I am talking to you.

LEON: He made you do it. He did, right?

LUCIJA: Leon, what do you want me to say?

LEON: Just talk to me.

Silence.

LEON: He made you do it, right?

LUCIJA: What, Leon, do you think everyone's like you? Do you think that just because you make people do things everybody else does too or what?

LEON: What are you talking about? What did I –

LUCIJA: Everything. Everything always had to be your way.

LEON: My way?

LUCIJA: Yes.

LEON: My way?

LUCIJA: Your way. We always did what you wanted to, not me.

Silence.

LEON: How many years did we live together, just us?

LUCIJA: You know how many.

LEON: Who insisted we should live by ourselves?

Silence.

LEON: Who insisted we should live by ourselves?

Silence.

LEON: Who took care of everything from the beginning? Who made the decisions?

Who wanted to sell the apartment? Who made me shit in the fucking box?

LUCIJA: But you wanted –

LEON: Who made up the oath?

LUCIJA: I did, but –

LEON: I didn't want to take an oath at all.

LUCIJA: We both –

LEON: You did the thinking for us.

LUCIJA: Yes, but –

LEON: No buts. You were the brains, not me.

LUCIJA: I only –

LEON: Did the thinking for us?

Silence.

LUCIJA: Yes.

LEON: We did what you thought up and what we both agreed on.

Silence.

LEON: And what about now?

LUCIJA: What?

LEON: What do you do?

LUCIJA: Nothing. I teach.

LEON: And?

LUCIJA: Nothing. What?

LEON: When you come home.

LUCIJA: What?

LEON: What do you do when you come home. When you stop teaching. When you come home from your fucking job. What do you do?

LUCIJA: What, what... Take a look around yourself. Do you think these things just get done by themselves? And I have to prepare myself for school and ... What are you talking about? There's always something. What do you want from me?

LEON: And what does the geezer do?

LUCIJA: He writes, works.

LEON: And?

LUCIJA: What?

LEON: After – that?

LUCIJA: Do you think there is after – that? We don't have time for anything. We hardly see each other as it is.

LEON: What about our friends?

LUCIJA: What about them?

LEON: Do you see them?

LUCIJA: No. Haven't for a while.

LEON: Why is that?

LUCIJA: Leon, what do you want? I don't know why I don't see them. I don't see them, that's all. I don't see anybody. Matjaž and I have some friends, I get to see them once in a while.

LEON: And aunt Bertha.

LUCIJA: Yes.

LEON: So you and the geezer have something to talk about.

Silence.

LEON: You don't think there's anything wrong with that, do you?

LUCIJA: Leon, I don't know what it is you want to hear.

LEON: You.

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)*

LEON: I want you to sit next to me again and say: "Leon, this isn't right. We have to do something."

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)*

LEON: And I want to say again "that's why I'm here."

Silence.

LEON: This is not you.

Silence.

LEON: What has he done to you?

LUCIJA: Nothing.

LEON: Except maybe a lobotomy.

Silence.

LEON: Why the geezer?

LUCIJA: Matjaž. His name's Matjaž.

LEON: Whatever. What's his story? What are you doing with him?

LUCIJA: Nothing. He's my husband, what am I supposed to be doing with him?

LEON: You gave yourself to him, just like that.

LUCIJA: Yes.

LEON: Why?

LUCIJA: Why do you think?

LEON: I don't know, you tell me.

LUCIJA: Because... *(Pause.)* Because I needed him.

LEON: Him? You needed him? The geezer?

LUCIJA: Matjaž. Yes.

LEON: You have really been brainwashed. He really brainwashed you.

LUCIJA: Matjaž didn't brainwash me, he's been by my side, that's all. What do you know? You appear all of a sudden and what?

LEON: I came to visit my twin sister. What's wrong with that?

LUCIJA: Everything.

LEON: Yes?

LUCIJA: Yes.

LEON: Why?

LUCIJA: Because I don't need you any more.

Silence.

LEON: You don't have to be like that.

LUCIJA: That's what I'm like, Leon.

LEON: You haven't always been like that.

LUCIJA: Yes I have. Always.

LEON: So, what's that? *(Points at the book.)*

LUCIJA: A novel. It's called "More."

LEON: "You didn't forget, you just don't remember any more."

LUCIJA: "More."

Silence.

LEON: Remember when we found out Mom and Dad died?

LUCIJA: Our seventeenth birthday present, from aunt Bertha. She came to get us from the pool. What about it?

LEON: Do you remember what you said?

LUCIJA: No idea.

LEON: Come on, use your head.

LUCIJA: OK. *(Pause. She looks at him.)* And?

LEON: And nothing.

Tišina.

LEON: But you didn't forget about the werewolf.

LUCIJA: No, I didn't forget about the werewolf.

LEON: It's just ... In my dreams you did jump out the window. You didn't tear me apart.

LUCIJA: I changed the ending.

LEON: For the geezer?

LUCIJA: For Matjaž. Yes.

LEON: *(Smiles.)* Were-Lučka.

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)* Were-Lučka. I didn't forget.

Silence.

LEON: Why did you tell him my dreams?

Silence.

LEON: *(Points at the book.)* This is our story, not his. It's us two in there. Me and you. What has he got to do with us?

LUCIJA: It's only a novel. Who cares about novels?

LEON: Me and you.

LUCIJA: Leon, stop, please.

LEON: Me and you, Lučka.

LUCIJA: Leon ...

LEON: Me and you.

LUCIJA: Stop it.

LEON: Me and you, Lučka.

LUCIJA: Stop it!

Silence.

LEON: How could you let him take a piss at us like this?

LUCIJA: I didn't let him anything. Go now.

LEON: Where should I go, Were-Lučka?

LUCIJA: *(Smiles. Becomes serious.)* Just go.

Silence.

LEON: You know I'm not going.

Silence.

LEON: Will you talk to me?

Silence.

LEON: Will you talk to me?

LUCIJA: Sure. What's really bothering you? What's bothering you, Leon?

Silence.

LUCIJA: Talk to me.

LEON: Okay.

(Smiles. Becomes serious.)

This is bothering me.

(Kicks the shoe.)

LUCIJA: Hey!

(Picks up the shoe and arranges it.)

LEON: And this.

(Takes the coat and throws it to the floor.)

LUCIJA: Hey!

(Picks up the coat, hangs it up and strokes it.)

LEON: And this.

(Pushes the handbag on the floor.)

LUCIJA: Stop it!

(Picks up the handbag, puts it on the shelf and strokes it.)

LEON: And this is bothering me.

(Pushes the pile of newspapers and publicity catalogues on the floor.)

LUCIJA: Leon, stop it! You're crazy, stop it!

(Picks up the papers and puts them back in the pile.)

LEON: Everything's bothering me.

(Points to the book.)

That it's us in that book. Our story. Our fears and ... our decisions ... and... and all that. And ...

LUCIJA: *(Sorting papers.)*

LEON: And that the geezer just took a piss at everything.

LUCIJA: *(Sorting papers.)* Matjaž.

LEON: That's bothering me. And what's bothering me most of all is that you let him do it. The girl from the novel never would have and I wonder what happened to her.

LUCIJA: So that means that the guy from the novel's still here?

Silence.

LUCIJA: Is that what you wanted to say?

LEON: If I remember you correctly, you detested liars. You would never have let him. When Bertha wanted to grab us all for herself at seventeen, you wouldn't let her. Why did you let the geezer do it? You didn't let Bertha, why do you let the geezer jerk you around, for fuck's sake?

LUCIJA: Leon, my husband is Matjaž. And I don't let him do anything to me, he hasn't done anything to me, understand?

LEON: Did you forget how we used to watch the news every night and write hate mail to all the repressive assholes they would have on there?

LUCIJA: *(Settles the handbag.)*

LEON: Did you forget?

LUCIJA: *(Takes off the coat.)*

LEON: All the things you used to care about?

LUCIJA: *(Folds the coat.)*

LEON: You never used to settle for bullshit.

LUCIJA: *(Hangs up the coat.)*

LEON: For people like the geezer, for example.

LUCIJA: *(Strokes the coat.)*

LEON: For rotten twats.

LUCIJA: *(Arranges the shoes.)*

LEON: Did you forget?

LUCIJA: *(Settles the pile of papers.)*

LEON: How you used to take care of the neighbor's little girls?

LUCIJA: *(Settles the handbag.)*

LEON: Who did they come to when they got beaten up at home?

LUCIJA: *(Strokes the coat.)*

LEON: Who did they have except you?

LUCIJA: Leon, I've had enough of you. What the fuck do they have to do with anything?

LEON: What has the geezer got to do with them?

LUCIJA: Matjaž.

Silence.

LEON: What about our oath?

LUCIJA: Our oath is nothing but teenage bullshit. Okay? Now chill out. Or get out.

Silence.

LEON: You sold me out. Me, the neighbor's girls. You sold everything I believed in. Everything I did with you for years. For what? For nothing. Nothing. (*Points at the book.*) There's nothing in there. (*Pause.*) You whored us, for fuck's sake. You sold us ... to him.

LUCIJA: I've haven't sold us to anyone, Leon. Knock it off.

LEON: The geezer, who cares about nothing else but having his belly full. What the fuck does he know about us, about our oath? What does he care about but his full belly?

LUCIJA: He cares about me.

LEON: Yes, right. That's part of it. Part of the full belly. That's what I'm talking about.

LUCIJA: Leon ...

LEON: This life of yours has nothing to do with you for fuck's sake, you can't be with him.

LUCIJA: Leon, as one gets older and wiser... Well, one has to live. We were deluding ourselves. Those were teenage delusions. One can't change the world. (*Pause.*) How can you not understand that?

LEON: You're nuts. You're not normal. You've turned into just another fucking rotten twat.

Scene 5

Lucija and Leon. The book.

Matjaž enters.

MATJAŽ: What's going on?

LUCIJA: Nothing, go to bed.

LEON: What do you mean nothing? Brother-in-law has come for a visit.

LUCIJA: I said nothing.

MATJAŽ: Well, it doesn't happen every day—

LUCIJA: It's not important.

MATJAŽ: That's a lot of noise at this hour ...

LEON: It's inappropriate, really. I apologize. Nothing can be that important.

MATJAŽ: With all due respect, I don't know if it really isn't important.

LEON: Do you really think I would come here for nothing?

LUCIJA: Why did you even come at all?

MATJAŽ: You woke me up. / LEON: You know why.

MATJAŽ: What is it, sugar?

LUCIJA: It's nothing. Really. Go to bed. I'll be there soon, alright?

LEON: It's really nothing. A trifle. Forget it.

LUCIJA: It's just ...

MATJAŽ: What?

LUCIJA: I don't know, I don't know.

LEON: Spit it out, what is the matter with you? Or should I?

LUCIJA: Leon ...

LEON: Stop this Leon shit, ask him. Say it.

MATJAŽ: What is it, sugar?

LEON: Sugar doesn't know herself. Or do you?

LUCIJA: I'm not sure.

LEON: Sit down, we need you here.

MATJAŽ: Would you like to talk to me about something?

LUCIJA: That'll be nice. Just for a little while.

LEON: Sit down already.

MATJAŽ: But just for a little while. It's rather late.

LEON: Come on, geezer, you're not that old.

MATJAŽ: It's not that I'm that old but ...

LUCIJA: Leave him alone, Leon. Leave the man alone.

MATJAŽ: It's fine. I'm not such a corpse. What is it, then? Sugar, I'm sure everything's going to be just fine. Sometimes things are not that easy, but tomorrow, sugar, everything's going to be just fine. What is it?

LUCIJA: It's about this. (*Touches the book.*)

MATJAŽ: About this?

LEON / LUCIJA: Yes.

MATJAŽ: Because of the title?

LUCIJA: No, not the title, it's because of this. (*Points at the book.*)

MATJAŽ: What?

LEON: (*Takes the book.*) It's printed very nicely, with a totally multilayered title and we'd just like to know how you could do it?

LUCIJA: Just explain how this came about.

MATJAŽ: How what came about?

LEON: The dessicating of the Aral Lake, what do you think we're talking about?

LUCIJA: The novel. *More.*

MATJAŽ: I don't understand. What is it? What is it, sugar? Have you again had those exhausting thoughts? What is it?

LEON: Look, Geezer, either you're a moron, or ...

LUCIJA: Leon, don't.

LEON: Come on, take a look at him – a stale old capitalist pretending not to be one. My Lučka wouldn't even bother to –

LUCIJA: Your Lučka is gone, okay?

LEON: Yes, she committed suicide nine years ago.

LUCIJA: But aunt Bertha saved her. And you weren't there.

LEON: I think no one saved you.

MATJAŽ: Well, what do you want from me? What is this about?

LUCIJA: The novel. How the novel came about.

MATJAŽ: What about the novel? It's not really convenient time of the day for debating. Especially when one is so beside oneself. Sugar, tomorrow is another day.

LEON: The geezer is really something. That's it, yeah. Tomorrow is another day. (*To Lucija.*) A fucking genius you have here.

LUCIJA: Leon, control yourself, I'll kick you out.

LEON: You can't kick me out.

LUCIJA: I fucking can.

LEON: Not my Lučka.

LUCIJA: Your Lučka is gone, so get the hell out of here! Matjaž, is it so hard to answer? Answer him already so that he will get the fuck out of here! MATJAŽ: I don't know what this is all about. And truthfully, I don't I want to know.

LEON: How could you let this shithead steal your –

LUCIJA: Leon!

LEON: He fucking stole our lives.

LUCIJA: He didn't steal anything.

LEON: So what is this then?

LUCIJA: It's a novel. It's about us, but Matjaž didn't ... Or did you, Matjaž?

MATJAŽ: Did I what?
LEON: Steal. Steal the book.
LUCIJA: No.
LEON: Well, how would you describe it then?
LUCIJA: I don't know, but ...
LEON: Say it.
LUCIJA: Okay. *(Pause.)* Matjaž, why did you steal my novel?
MATJAŽ: Steal? I don't understand.
LEON: What is there to understand? She wrote it and you published it under your name.
LUCIJA: Yes, but ...
LEON: With an appropriately modified title. Multilayered, I hear. And our question was why did you do it. Why. Did. You. Steal. Her. Novel.
MATJAŽ: I haven't stolen anything.
LEON: Somehow I knew you'd say that.
LUCIJA: Actually you did, Matjaž ... In a way.
MATJAŽ: Sugar?
LEON: In a way you did, Matjaž.
MATJAŽ: You just shut up, okay?
LEON: You won't tell me –
LUCIJA: Leon!
MATJAŽ: Stole? What do you mean stole?
LUCIJA: I don't know, as I said, in a way... I don't know.
LEON: Lučka, don't let him jerk you around. Tell him.
LUCIJA: I a way you did.
MATJAŽ: I did it for you, sugar. You said so yourself. You said that ...
LUCIJA: Yes. *(Pause.)* No. *(Pause.)* I don't know.
LEON: Lučka, it's you and me in here.
LUCIJA: Leon ...
LEON: Me and you.
LUCIJA: Matjaž ...
LEON: Me and you, Lučka.
LUCIJA: Why did you steal my novel?
MATJAŽ: What is this now? What is this all about, sugar? What are you saying?
LUCIJA: Nothing, it's nothing ...
MATJAŽ: Could we leave this for another time? It's late, it's really not a good time for this conversation.
LEON: You won't get away with it so easily, geezer. We are going to have this conversation now. Answer.
LUCIJA: Matjaž, don't listen. You're right. Let's just go to bed. Yes, another time.

LEON: No way is he going to bed. No way we're leaving anything for another time. Let him tell us. Why the fuck he did it.

LUCIJA: Leon!

LEON: Stop this Leon shit. Look at yourself, for god's sake, you are like an ...amoeba. You should be ashamed of yourself. How could you turn out to be such a ... piece of shit, for fuck's sake.

LUCIJA: Leon, shut up. Shut up! (*To Matjaž.*) Matjaž, you'll tell me why you stole my book another time.

MATJAŽ: What in the world is that supposed to mean? What do you want from me? I didn't know there was a problem, you never said anything. I thought that we reached a conclusion ... And now, in the middle of the night ... What?

LEON: The theft. Explain why you did it. Is it so hard to get anything across to this academic moron? You stole, for fuck's sake.

MATJAŽ: I did it for you. You know that.

LUCIJA: Matjaž, I do understand. I do understand, it's just ...

LEON: It's just not right, right, Lučka?

LUCIJA: I don't know, I don't really know.

LEON: It wasn't right. It isn't right.

LUCIJA: It might not have been right, Matjaž.

MATJAŽ: What's not right all the sudden? What do you want from me?

LEON: Just an answer to a very simple question.

MATJAŽ: Things are so simple to you. In the middle of the night, you require me to answer some idiotic question.

LUCIJA: Matjaž, don't get upset. Let it be. Let things be. And let's go to bed.

LEON: Well, well, not only is the geezer witty, he also gets upset.

LUCIJA: Leon, get the fuck out of here.

LEON: I'm waiting.

MATJAŽ: All right. Fine. Let's go through all this once again calmly.

LUCIJA: We don't have to go through anything. Go to bed. Leon, get the fuck out of here.

LEON: I'm listening.

MATJAŽ: Go on and listen. So that there'll be some peace once and for all. I'm supposed to have stolen a novel, right?

LEON: Bravo.

LUCIJA: No, not really.

LEON: Let him talk.

LUCIJA: In a way, as I said, not literally stolen.

MATJAŽ: Just a moment. When you let me read your notes –

LEON: Why did you give him your notes to read?

LUCIJA: I don't know. Because...

LEON: Because of what?

LUCIJA: They weren't really notes. It was more like a diary.

LEON: Why did you give it to the geezer to read?

LUCIJA: Matjaž. Because ... I don't know why. Because he's my husband, for fuck's sake.

LEON: (*To Matjaž.*) And you just jumped at it.

MATJAŽ: When I read the notes –

LEON: The diary.

LUCIJA: It was more of a diary than notes.

MATJAŽ: - you asked me what I thought. Right?

LUCIJA: Yes but ...

MATJAŽ: I told you it was good.

LEON: A diary, not notes.

LUCIJA: I wrote it for myself, Matjaž.

MATJAŽ: The notes were too good to lie in a drawer. Right?

LEON: You are so full of shit.

LUCIJA: That's what you said.

MATJAŽ: You didn't want to publish them, did you?

LEON: Because she was writing them for herself, geezer.

LUCIJA: Because I was writing for myself.

MATJAŽ: You said that it wasn't really good material, that it wasn't fit for publication.

LUCIJA: Yes, I said it wasn't for publication.

LEON: Geezer, you really are such a stale capitalist whore.

MATJAŽ: Wait a minute! Let me tell my side of the story. I talked to some friends, who –

LEON: - are even crustier than you.

MATJAŽ: - have an excellent insight into these matters. And that's that. We did agree in the end that it's a shame for such good work to lie in a drawer, didn't we?

LUCIJA: Yes. That's what you said.

MATJAŽ: Don't tell me what I said, I know what I said and I know what I did but I really have no idea why you're now reproaching me for "stealing" your book. I did it for you. For you.

LEON: You motherfucker ... Do you think I am going to sit here and smile so you can screw my sister in peace? Huh? Do you think you can make fun of my family that easily? You won't, you motherfucker. You fucking won't. I won't allow it, I'll rather cut off your fucking academic nose and shove it up your academic cunt.

MATJAŽ: That is really out of hand. I have nothing to apologize for. Don't forget that you yourself proposed it.

LUCIJA: It was only half serious.

MATJAŽ: It was not half serious. Sugar, it was not half serious.

LUCIJA: No, Matjaž, it wasn't.

MATJAŽ: You said: "You publish the book yourself, Matjaž." That is what you said, sugar.

LEON: " if you really think it's necessary."

LUCIJA: " if you really think it's necessary." That's what I said. "So you publish the book yourself, Matjaž, if you really think it's necessary."

MATJAŽ: It wasn't half serious.

LUCIJA: No, it really wasn't half serious.

LEON: This is not you. If it was you, you'd set a box full of shit in front of your own door every morning.

LUCIJA: Leon, as one gets older –

LEON: - and wiser.

LUCIJA: Yes. Wiser.

Silence.

LUCIJA: Go now.

LEON: You really don't need me?

Silence.

MATJAŽ: I am tired.

LEON: You're old.

LUCIJA: Yes, you're old.

MATJAŽ: Shall we go to bed?

LEON: Yes, go and cuddle a bit.

LUCIJA: Yes, let's go and cuddle a bit.

MATJAŽ: So are we finished here?

LEON: There's just one thing that I would like to know.

MATJAŽ: Yes?

LEON: How have you managed to lobotomize her so completely?

LUCIJA: How have you managed to lobotomize me so completely? Just tell me that one last thing.

MATJAŽ: Will this never stop? This is preposterous, I'm tired, I can't stand anymore of this. What lobotomy, what are you talking about. You've changed, along with me. I've changed along with you. Sugar, you know very well, that every human interaction results in a lobotomy.

LUCIJA: Cut the crap. Can you cut the crap for once and answer the fucking question? How have you managed to lobotomize me so completely?

MATJAŽ: What's this now? What's happened to you?

LUCIJA: Answer the fucking question.

MATJAŽ: What? I did it for you. For you. You know that.

LUCIJA: You're so full of shit.

MATJAŽ: This discussion isn't going anywhere. We'll talk about it tomorrow –

LUCIJA: Tell me, how did you manage to make such a ... piece of shit out of me?

MATJAŽ: This is not you, sugar.

LUCIJA: No. If it was me, I'd set a box full of shit in front of your door every morning.

MATJAŽ: What are you saying? You're insane, you're not normal. You've gone nuts.

LUCIJA: Why did you steal my diary?

MATJAŽ: It was excellent work, for fuck's sake. Every dickless piece of shit who feels like it publishes a novel, and when you have something good, it should remain in a drawer or something? You said it yourself ... And now ...

LUCIJA: Why did you steal my diary?

MATJAŽ: I didn't steal anything.

LUCIJA: You grabbed my diary all for yourself and published it under your name. For me.

MATJAŽ: I did it for you. For both of us.

LUCIJA: You needn't have made such sacrifices. You could have left everything in the drawer and that would have been quite enough. For me.

MATJAŽ: We reached a –

LUCIJA: It was about me and Leon, you know, about us two, not about this. (*Points at the book.*) What do you know about us? You never cared about us. Have you ever asked me about the things in that book? Have you ever been interested in us? Do you have any idea why we even took that oath?

MATJAŽ: Those were teenage delusions. As one gets older and wiser... You know that, what you are saying? What are you talking about?

LUCIJA: You have no idea. All you say about your novel is a few shallow phrases, some judicious words. You have no idea what it is you've signed.

MATJAŽ: No, this is not you.

LUCIJA: I showed you the diary because I wanted you to understand. Me and Leon and everything. That's why I wanted you to read it. To end this. To end this.

(*Kicks in the shoes.*)

And this.

(*Throws coat on the floor.*)

And this.

(*Throws handbag on the floor.*)

And this.

(*Throws papers on the floor.*)

MATJAŽ: Sugar, you're dramatizing. Calm down. Everything's going to be just fine.

LUCIJA: But I didn't want this. (*Points at the book.*) I don't need that.

MATJAŽ: (*Arranges the shoes.*)

LUCIJA: There's nothing in here anymore. Nothing.

MATJAŽ: (*Hangs up the coat.*)

LUCIJA: You haven't got a clue. Because you really are a rotten twat.

MATJAŽ: (*Puts the handbag on the shelf.*)

LUCIJA: Because you really are a limp dick stale capitalist. That's why.

MATJAŽ: (*Picking up the papers.*)

LEON: There is my Lučka. She glows. Just barely, but she does. Tell him everything, Lučka.

LUCIJA: Get out of here, Leon, I can't do this anymore.

Silence.

I told you everything, Matjaž. Every single thing.

LEON: Perhaps it is best if I leave you two alone.

MATJAŽ: Oh, many fucking thanks.

Leon leaves.

Scene 6

Lucija and Matjaž. The book.

Long silence.

Matjaž leaves.

Scene 7

Lucija. The book.

Leon is watching her.

LUCIJA: Why did you leave me?

Silence.

LUCIJA: And what are you doing here now?

LEON: I came to get you.

LUCIJA: Get me?

LEON: Yes.

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)*

Silence.

LUCIJA: Why did you come here?

LEON: I wanted to make things better for you.

LUCIJA: Make things better for me?

LEON: Yes. I wanted you to be yourself again.

LUCIJA: Then you're not going to leave?

LEON: *(Smiles.)*

LUCIJA: You think I'm better off now?

LEON: Yes.

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)*

LEON: Aren't you?

LUCIJA: How about him? You think he's any better off now?

LEON: He'll never be better off, he's never been any better off than he is now.

LUCIJA: Leon, you're fucking wrong.

LEON: I am not.

LUCIJA: And even if you're not, who asked you? Do you think I care? Go away.

LEON: You really are banal.

Silence.

LEON: Are you coming with me?

Silence.

LEON: Then you're not coming with me? We could have fun.

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)*

LEON: Really.

LUCIJA: And what would we do?

LEON: Eat chocolate truffles.

LUCIJA: Would we set boxes in front of the doors again?

LEON: Not that, no. One doesn't shit there.

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)*

LEON: I came because you called me.

LUCIJA: Come on, Leon, I've been calling you for nine years. Why come now?

LEON: Are you really not better off now?

LUCIJA: I would be better off if you were still here. Maybe.

Silence.

LEON: I'm going.

LUCIJA: Just like that?

LEON: Yes.

LUCIJA: Will you come –

LEON: No.

LUCIJA: So you didn't really come to get me?

LEON: No. LUCIJA: Go.

LEON: *(Smiles.)*

Silence.

LUCIJA: Why did you leave me?

Silence.

Leon leaves.

Scene 8

Lucija. The book.

Matjaž enters.

MATJAŽ: What's going on, sugar?

LUCIJA: Nothing.

MATJAŽ: Are you all right?

LUCIJA: Yes. You?

MATJAŽ: I am.

Silence.

LUCIJA: Leon's Lučka was buried the day Leon was.

MATJAŽ: *(Strokes Lucija's cheek.)*

(Kisses her on her hair.)

LUCIJA: Do you know that?

MATJAŽ: We should go out here and there. Spoil ourselves a little.

Silence.

LUCIJA: She was buried, together, with him.

MATJAŽ: Sugar ...

MATJAŽ: *(Strokes Lucija's cheek.)*

(Kisses her on her hair.)

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)*

MATJAŽ: Sugar, I love you. *(Smiles.)* You know that.

LUCIJA: I know.

Silence.

MATJAŽ: Shall we go to bed?

LUCIJA: I want to sit here for a little longer.

MATJAŽ: Would you like me to ...

LUCIJA: No. Thank you. Just go ahead.

MATJAŽ: Is everything really all right?

LUCIJA: Yes, go to sleep. I'd only like ...

MATJAŽ: What?

LUCIJA: I don't know. Leon, perhaps.

MATJAŽ: Sugar...

(Strokes Lucija's cheek.)

(Kisses her on her hair.)

LUCIJA: Perhaps Leon's Lučka.

MATJAŽ: I don't quite follow you, sugar.

LUCIJA: That is because I barely glow anymore.

MATJAŽ: What?

LUCIJA: Nothing.

MATJAŽ: I'm tired.

LUCIJA: You're old.

MATJAŽ: Yes.

Silence.

MATJAŽ: Sugar, I'm going to bed.

LUCIJA: Go on.

MATJAŽ: Come soon.

LUCIJA: *(Smiles.)* To my little boy?

MATJAŽ: *(Smiles.)* To your little boy.

Matjaž leaves.

Lucija sits, a book in front of her.

Silence.

Leon is watching.

The end.