

The way we love them. The way they love us

Gala Uzryutova
gala.uzryutova@list.ru

CHARACTERS

JEFF – 55; speaks quickly, deafly, abruptly, with an echo, as if at night the ring quickly rolled down the long staircase and jumped, setting the rhythm to itself; Zodiac sign – Capricorn; according to the Eysenck-test – neurotic extrovert; when he walks, everything make sounds – his bracelets, chains and keys

TOBY – 25; speaks slowly, picks up words; Zodiac sign – Fish; according to the color Lusher-test: psychophysiological state – risk group.

MARTHA – 30; speaks as if she doesn' care, but she does; Zodiac sign – who knows; cant pass any psychological test to the end

THE VOICE OF THE HOTEL STAFF

VOICE OF THE MAN

SCENE 1

Berlin,

standard boring single economy room in the hotel.

One bed for one man.

Winter, almost night.

Toby's entering the room and slamming the door.

TOBY (speaking by mobile phone). Yeah, baby, I'm in hotel. Nothing, just undressing, standing in my underpants in front of a mirror. Are you okay? I'm already miss you. Me too. I'll call you back when I'll be in the airport. Nothing, just listening to music all the evening. Bye, love you, Martha!

Toby's listening the music on the mobile phone.

Sound of the opening door.

JEFF. Room three hundred and seven?

Toby turns off the music.

TOBY. Yes.

JEFF. I didn't call the boys into the room.

TOBY. You are also not my type.

JEFF (entering). What are ya even doin' here?

TOBY. Actually, it's my room.

JEFF. Read here, on the guest card. It's written - three hundred and seven!

TOBY (looks for something in his bag, ringing the keys). Here. My guest card. The same - three hundred and seven!

JEFF. Shit! Now we'll find out.

TOBY. You sat on my bed.

JEFF (on the hotel phone). Hello? Reception? We have a problem. Three hundred and seven. I have a guy in my room, he is even naked. What ya mean? What? What does it mean you dont have rooms? I flew in business class, I have the right to my own room! I dont care of the weather trouble! I dont care that you dont have any rooms! I dont care about force majeure! What? I have to believe that in all hotels near Berlin airport situation is the same? I'm lucky. Yep, there is one bed for two guys! Can you change it? What do ya mean no? Wait! Do you have a clamshell? How can I sleep with a man? I'm asking ya! Shit! She doesnt know yet who she deal with, this girl!

The sound of the door slamming.

Toby's putting on his trousers and T-shirt.

Turning on the TV, clicking the channels.

The sound of the opening door, Jeff is entering the room.

Toby is turning TV off.

JEFF. No rooms! They dont have rooms!

TOBY. They are not to blame, the situation is just...

JEFF. Nobody is to blame for us, nobody answers for the words. The crane collapsed - it's the wind, the head hurts - the magnetic storm, billions dollars are gone - the mouse stole it. Everywhere thing are the same.

Lighter sound.

TOBY. Actually, it's a non-smoking room.

JEFF. Are you a sissy?

TOBY. No.

JEFF (smoking, clearing throat). Youngsters. Dont annoy me. My son is the same. Like you. May be younger.

TOBY. I'm twenty five.

JEFF. He's twenty. Same as you. No energy, like all ya youngsters today. Didnt serve in the army, still clings to the mother's skirt. She even taught him to cook jam, you know? I said him – go with me, guy, go hunting, to drive wild boars. And he said hunting isnt kinda humane, cant you believe it? Doesnt eat meat and all this stuff. Everyone has become a humanist now, damn it. They cant even to hit the face. Cant anything!

TOBY. We have other ways of communication.

JEFF. No, you're really a sissy! Were you a man you would have struck me long ago, and put out a cigarette on my face!

TOBY. This wont help.

JEFF. A fatalist, or what? Nothing will. Dont get drunk behind the wheel, fatalist! Ya youngsters are all listless. I feel younger than ya all, dude. Seriously. We with the boys hijacked cars, drove the girls at your age. Girls squealed, but now...

TOBY. Now just discourse is different.

JEFF (laughing). What what?

TOBY. Discourse. Was replaced.

JEFF. Discourse is bullshit!

TOBY. Yeah, everything is garbage, I've got you.

JEFF (continuing to smoke). All is bullshit. You know what is not bullshit? My daughter texted me. In this, in sorta WhatsApp. Teach me, Dad, she said. What, I say, can I teach ya, daughter? To drink and smoke? Do you know what she said? Teach me not to lose heart. And that's all. Teach not to lose heart.

TOBY. Did you teach her?

JEFF. Live, I tell her. No matter what shit happens, just live!

The sound of the opening window.

TOBY. Actually, the street isnt an ashtray.

The sound of the closing window.

JEFF. Humanist, help me lay out this chair.

The sound of moving furniture.

TOBY. This chair cannot be decomposed.

The sound of moving furniture again.

TOBY. It doesn't decompose. I see it.

JEFF. You see? You believe in everything you see?

TOBY. No, why?

The sound of moving furniture stops.

JEFF. Who I am?

TOBY. You mean...

JEFF. Well, what I do?

TOBY. Dont know.

JEFF. It's visible.

TOBY. A musician, I guess.

JEFF (laughs). Sorta musician (rustles, looking for something in his backpack). Come on, musician,
Whiskey?

The sound of the opening bottle of whiskey.

JEFF. I've been trading whiskey for twenty years. I can tell the whiskey by the smell. Musician
(laughs). I know how many musicians I've done. Get the glasses.

The sound of the glasses.

The sound of pouring whiskey.

JEFF. Come on. For us! I'm Jeff.

TOBY. Toby.

They drink.

JEFF. And you're, let me guess... kinda blogger or may be a journalist?

TOBY. Oh. Yeah, I write for different magazines.

JEFF. I've got you! And what are your articles about? Can I guess: fashion, parties, sex, music?

TOBY (laughing). And restaurants.

JEFF. All the pleasures of life.

The sound of Toby's mobile call.

TOBY (speaks on the phone). Hello, Martha. I said you I cant fly today, airports in Berlin are closed, yes, because of the weather. In a hotel. Yes, here, not far from the airport. In the morning, probably, we will fly, yes. I'm one. No, that is, there's still a man. Hotel has no rooms. Dont start, please. If you dont believe me, call the reception. Martha? Martha?

Mobile phone beeps.

JEFF. Your woman? Pecking at your brain?

TOBY. Thinks I'm cheating on her.

JEFF. I know it. My girl ate my brain. I'm coming to her from New York through Berlin. She is in London. She says, she wont sleep with me, because she loves me. I say – are you kiddin' me? I flew for the fifth time. We kiss like children, only. All women think men change them, even if it's not. But they do it by themselves. The best way to defend - an attack. It's gettin' hot here. In these hotels, always like this - bark or teeth chatter from the cold.

TOBY. Actually, it's cold here.

JEFF. Just drink more.

The sound of the glasses.
The sound of pouring whiskey.

JEFF. Is she good?

TOBY. Too good. I'm afraid she'll leave me.

JEFF. She sleeps with you?

TOBY. Yeah.

JEFF. Then it should be clear.

TOBY. What's clear?

JEFF. Loves you?

TOBY (cheekily). I'm afraid that she'll leave. I cant do it any longer. I began to sleep with others to be ready if she leaves. Every time I choose better and better. And the better I choose, the stronger I feel that she'll leave. She's crazy. She told me about one of her men. Once she met an old man to give him a youth, can you believe it? How can someone give a youth to another? Especially to the old man. I think, she has someone. I changed her five times already. I dont know. I cant stop. It's like ... like ... you stand in the middle of the river on a stick, sticking out of it. Water is around. And you ... you arrange around a few more posts that lead to the shore. Because you're afraid that the column on which you are standing will go under the water. And you too. It's true. Here is you place - other columns, and you slide - from one to another.

JEFF. You dont know how to swim? She knows?

TOBY. What?

JEFF. That you slept with other women?

TOBY. Of course not. She'll leave, if he finds out.

JEFF. And this way she wont leave you?

TOBY. Will leave. But I'll be ready. (pours more whiskey).

JEFF. Ya, youngsters, are now all nuts. This is my London's girl, she is thirty, or something. I tell her - give up. Give yourself to me. She says I cant. I tell her we'll still be together anyway- even in London, even in New York. Doesnt matter. And she's my simple, native person, she's my own, and that's it. She says she doesnt trust me. She says love - it's full of confidence, and all this stuff, you know?

TOBY. Actually, she is right.

JEFF. No one is wrong. We can die at any moment - that's all true. Live and that's it. Live. Dont reflex. If you understand she's yours - take her, love her. Dont wait. Dont wait ever. I've decided not to wait. I'm flying to London. We are like children. I'm like a child with her. I havent had this for a long time. I'm alive.

TOBY. Love young girls?

JEFF. They love me. Really. She says I look like 45, but I'm 55. I dont believe, of course, but it's nice. I drink young blood and I'm younger myself. She tells me, you're terrible, you are not able to love, you lie all the time. But she says when I'm with you, it's as if I'm on the edge. As if the current is coming on, she says. And she doesnt feel it with young men. She had one young man. In past. Well, as you probably. Handsome, she said, smart, but she doesnt feel electricity. There is no electricity, what can you do.

TOBY. And why was she with him then?

JEFF. He was kinda just a friend, she said. How do I know?

Jeff adds a whiskey in glasses,
and Jeff's ring is falling from his finger to Toby's glass.
Toby catches a ring from the glass.

TOBY. What a ring!

JEFF. Martha gave it to me. My girl. Never a woman gave me a ring. Have you ever seen a woman giving ya a ring? She didnt guess with a size, but it's good, silver. I like silver, gold isnt mine. She never explained what it is. She only said there was fish on the one side, fish on

the other side. .

TOBY. It's cold here anyway.

Suddenly, Toby's rushing to the Jeff,
beginning to beat him.

JEFF. What are ya doin'? What you need?

They're fighting, yelling at each other.
Then stop.

JEFF. Are you nuts? What you want?

The sound of Toby, looking for something in his bag.

TOBY. This is it.

JEFF. Your ring looks just like mine. Fish under water, fish over water. (pause) So this is yours?

TOBY. Yes. And I'm flying from Martha, from London.

JEFF. From Martha? From my Martha?

TOBY. Give my ring back. This is my Martha!

Jeff in a drunken rush grabs Toby by the T-shirt.
He falls on the bed and beats, Toby answers the same.

SCENE 2

The same hotel room.

The noise of water from the bathroom is heard,
then it ceases, the bathroom door opens, Jeff's coming out.

The sound of opening window.

JEFF. The snow is about meter already.

TOBY. Actually, it's cold here.

The sound of closing window.

JEFF. And the blanket is only one, is it? Shit!

TOBY. Lie on the bed, I'm going to the floor.

JEFF. Stay there. Give me the sheet.

TOBY. I'll sleep on the floor.

JEFF. I say, give me the sheet!

The sound of linens - Toby pulls out the sheet
from under a thick blanket, gives it to Jeff,
takes the second pillow from the bed, throws it to the floor.
They lie in the dark, Toby – on the bed, Jeff – on the floor.

TOBY. Maybe we'll change?

JEFF. Shut up.

Silence.

JEFF. What a stupid hotel! It was hot, now it's cold! They don't cut down the heat for the night at all,
do they? (pause) Do you have a T-shirt?

TOBY. What a T-shirt?

JEFF. Well, it's cold. Damn, the wind strikes from under the door. Why I left my luggage at the
airport? Have nothing to put on.

TOBY. So lie down on the bed, if it's cold.

JEFF. Shut up.

The sound of Toby, looking for T-shirt in his bag.

TOBY. This is the largest size T-shirt.

JEFF (putting the shirt on). T-shirt creeps up on me. They are obsessed with leanness, all T-shirts

must be sorta tight.

TOBY. Your belly sticks out.

JEFF. What is written on the T-shirt?

The sound of Jeff, turning on the light.

JEFF. Young, wild and free. (laughs). Youngsters! Come here.

TOBY. Why?

JEFF. Come here, youngster.

The sound of Toby,
standing up from the bed.

JEFF. Come to the mirror. Come, come! Straighten up.

TOBY. What?

JEFF. Straighten your back! Let me look at you normally. (pause) You're so young.

TOBY. Listen, leave me alone. She sleeps with me, not with you. Everything is clear.

JEFF. Clear, really? She just wants a young body, so she keeps ya to herself. But she loves me.

What can you give her? Wild and free. I used to think I would be forever young. Oldness doesnt come gradually, it's always unexpected. It wasnt - and it is. I used to go after girls, and now I drink whiskey and it's good. Suddenly good. Now in New York where I live, I jog back and forth and forget all stuff. I mean, if I turned off the stove, closed the door, and now I always return home. Recently, I was driving and suddenly remembered about the bouillon. The main thing - I put it on two hours ago. I felt sorry for my cat. He's old, 17 years old. He would go crazy with the smell. And there is no one to check the stove. I had to be late for work, I rushed home. The stove was off, the cat was asleep. I gave him a red fish. I would eat such a fish myself, but I got used to cat, dont want him to die. I castrated the cat a few years ago. But I'm not just that, you know? I have male solidarity. I was thinking for a week. Drank a lot of whiskey. My sister is now with the cat. I became too worried about everything. Once I drove a girl, a student, and she ridiculed this my insanity. She said: man, take pictures on your cell phone when you leave the house. And just imagine - it worked out. Look, it's in my cell phone. Full phone of photos - sockets,

stoves, windows, doors.

TOBY. Yeah, I dont even know what to say.

JEFF. Why do I go to Martha? Sometimes she so strokes my head that I dont need any sex. Just stroking - and that's it. And then I show to her new pictures of the stove, sockets, doors. Who else can I show it to? It's kinda weird, you know? You dont understand.

TOBY. You'd think we just sleep with her. But I really dont know what's going on with me when she is around. This is a contradiction. On the one point, she is gentle, attentive, but then she stops me. But love is ... love is like a joint scope, only this way it's possible. And if it isnt at full force, then why? I dont understand why she stops me.

JEFF. She loves me.

TOBY. She doesnt even sleep with you.

JEFF. She doesnt sleep, it means she loves.

TOBY. This is something new. It's strange all this. On the one point, I cant live without it. On the other point, I feel as if I were guilty before her. Sometimes I feel uneasy, and it seems to me that she wants me for herself, not to share with anyone. I have been struggling with this for a long time, but nothing happens, people dont understand. For me, love never ends. I never leave anyone, I wait until they ask me to leave. I dont believe that love can become weaker, I dont believe it. I have it forever.

JEFF. And if some woman never leaves you, and you dont want to be with her?

TOBY. This never happened before. All the same, women ever leave, sooner or later. If they dont, then time hasnt yet come.

JEFF. It's a come-off, you just want to sleep with all the women.

TOBY. No. It's just... You see, if I love - love passionately - I usually love those women with whom it's difficult to live, unthinkable or impossible. That's how with Martha. Therefore, I sleep with others, I try to focus not on this impossible stuff, which absorbs everything, but on the other senses. I try to love quietly and generously, so I can love several women.

JEFF. You're perisher. The perisher with a bunch of problems. No woman can stand it. I now understand why she sleeps with you. To keep your mouth shut.

TOBY. In fact, I'd like everything to be different, but I dont believe in it. It's impossible. Sometimes I meet someone whom I start to believe with, whom I want to be always, but then it turns out that she isnt ready. Or that she doesnt understand me at all. Sometimes I dont understand her. Almost no time there is an absolute coincidence. Ten years ago it seemed to me that I

had found it, but it always was that I wasn't ready. Now I'm ready, but I don't find any matches, or only partly.

JEFF. So, if you love everyone, then your woman can love everyone too? And Martha isn't jealous?
To me - not jealous?

TOBY. Martha is another matter, she's unrealizable. And if about others, I'd agree if my woman had another man. Only if it's not against me, not to humiliate me. It's better for a person, and healthier. Except if it's not an impossible love, like with Martha.

JEFF. Porridge in your head, boy, that's what I tell ya. You already know that Martha is changing you with me.

TOBY. You don't sleep together.

JEFF. This doesn't mean anything.

TOBY. It does.

JEFF. And if Martha finds out that you are cheating on her?

TOBY. How does she know?

JEFF. I will tell her.

TOBY. You will not say.

JEFF. I will.

TOBY. Just try it.

JEFF. What are you doing? Do you think only you have this unrealizable love? You think you're the elected one? I can be nobody with Martha, just lie with her and be nobody. Have you ever had such a thing with a woman? Have ya? You dunno it. She's in vain to hold me for a monster, I'm going crazy.

TOBY. You'll be guilty before her, if you say her.

JEFF. It's debauchery to have some feelings. Especially in this case. Feelings of guilt, for instance.
The main thing is not to include willpower, it's superfluous feeling.

TOBY. She'll hate you.

JEFF. I'll slip out, I learned this. She doesn't love ya anyway. She loves me. She has this with me - electricity.

The sound of the fight,
Toby beats Jeff, tears his own T-shirt on him.

TOBY. Let's call Martha!?! Right now! Come on! And ask her if she loves you!

JEFF. Come on, my chicken, come on, the feathers are already flying! Look, you tore your own T-shirt on me.

The sound of fighting stops.

SCENE 3

TOBY. We'll call her. Now.

JEFF. I'll call from the hotel phone. Let's turn off our cell phones. Let's observe neutrality.

TOBY. Shut up, dad!

Jeff dials the number on the hotel phone,
beeps coming from the phone.

TOBY. Dont tell her I'm here! Let's just listen what she'll said!

MARTHA (voice on the phone). Hello.

JEFF. Hi, it's me, Jeff.

MARTHA. Want to see you.

JEFF. Martha, listen...That is...That...I'm just wanna ask ya something, please, be honest.

MARTHA. Yeah, what's wrong? Where're you?

JEFF. No matter. Listen...I know you're hanging out with someone else.

Pause.

JEFF. Martha?

MARTHA. How do you know?

JEFF. No matter. Who is he?

MARTHA. Listen, it's just, just a friend. I cant say I love him or kind of that, but...

JEFF. Who is he?

MARTHA. Just a ..just one man, you dont know him.

JEFF. How long does it last?

MARTHA. What last? Listen, he's just a boy I know. I mean, I don't love him, I just...He is afraid. He can't dive into the water, although he most wants it. Afraid to fall there. The last time he came, we just were talking, then I fell asleep. The wind was very noisy at night, even frightening, as if the windows could open. I woke up from the wind, then from his touch. Then I fell asleep again. And I saw him in my dreams. I've never had such a dream before, so that I dream about the person with whom I lie next. In a dream, I called him from Ancient Rome, but I called from the call-box, can you imagine? And around - the ruins, and everything crumbled, the edges approached me. Some people have already fallen into this abyss of Rome, and who has stayed - stood behind me in line to call someone, until they themselves fell into the abyss. And I realized that I need to talk faster with him, with Toby, otherwise other people won't have time to talk with those whom they want. The edges were approaching, and soon everything would be showered. In this dream, Toby told me on the phone that I misunderstood him, that love's still possible. But Ancient Rome was showered, and I woke up. I saw his neck, his T-shirt. Then he opened his eyes. His eyes were sad. I've never seen this. Grey. Deep.

JEFF. Listen, what ya say? What does it all mean?

The sound of a sobbing Toby.

MARTHA. Wait. Once, in Prague, we were together at a party. Toby was there to speak, say something about his project. It was dark there, a lot of people. In some old building, from those in which different art clubs are doing now. With good acoustics. Everyone was making noise, drinking. Toby stood in the corner next to the stage. He had to check the microphone, and suddenly he sang. Into the microphone. He began to sing so quietly, and all became silent. I've never heard him sing before. As if from a distance, slowly, gently and as if he was alone then. (pause) Sometimes I try to remember faces – his, yours. But it's very difficult. Did you notice that the faces of those we love are the hardest to remember?

JEFF. I always remember your face.

MARTHA. No, it just seems to you. No matter how hard you try, it won't work, really. These faces - they ... become sandy, they fly apart before you manage to remember them. Probably some kind of self-defense mechanism works, because it's really like looking into the abyss. In order not to scroll this person constantly, not to go crazy about his beauty. And only

occasionally it will flash like this - with a smile, or with a turn somehow, millionths of a second - I see the whole face. And again - it crumbles. Even before I have time to remember it again.

JEFF. I just dont understand one thing - what the am I doing here? Where I am? You're crazy! I do mean to say that, you are...

MARTHA. Sorry, but...

Toby is taking out the hotel phone from the power socket.

JEFF. What you do, youngster?! Why did you turn off the phone? I just started to get Martha out, and you interrupted us!

TOBY. I've got everything I wanted to know. She doesnt love me. Just a boy she knows! Did you hear that?!

SCENE 4

Toby sobs with tears.

JEFF. Stop it! You're really just a boy, if you cry so often! I say, stop it!

TOBY (sobbing). She'll never want to see me again.

JEFF. Do you think that love can save ya? Do you really think so? Love is not salvation, love is difficult. Why am I, an old man, now have to explain this to you, as if you are a little boy?!

Toby's sobbing calms.

JEFF. Didnt anyone tell ya that no love will ever save you?

TOBY. Why do you think so? Love is salvation.

JEFF. My boy, what kinda kids dreams?

The sound of pouring whiskey - Jeff fills a glass of Toby.

JEFF. Drink. Listen, if you weren't explained in your childhood, I'll tell ya. Love is such a thing that

doesn't save, it makes a person even more vulnerable.

TOBY. You don't understand anything. Love can save you from everything, I've been through it and more than once.

JEFF. Salvation is getting rid of something, you know? And what does love save from? Are you becoming less scared? No. You're more afraid! Does it make you happier? If only for a minute, and so - you are more often sad because of problems with love. Do you feel more free? Not at all. Love binds ya on the hands and feet. Like you and I were tied up in this hotel room. Look, we're two men. Until recently, we didn't know each other, and now we sit here and swear for one woman, and she shit on us, you know? I'm not sure now that she loves me.

TOBY. I'm not sure that you're talking about love. You talk about passion. You only think about how to sleep with women, and I'm talking about something else.

JEFF. Actually, it's not me sleeping with everyone, afraid that Martha will leave.

TOBY. Do you really love her?

JEFF. Seems to be yes. I haven't flown so much distance to anyone yet.

TOBY. Then we can do one thing.

JEFF. What you mean?

TOBY. Look, our mobile phones are off. I'll call her from the hotel room, and I'll be quiet. She'll think it's you who called back and called your name. Then I will demand explanations from her about what's the Jeff and all this stuff. She'll have to tell me about you. And you'll hear everything by yourself. Ready? Or afraid?

JEFF. I'm not afraid of anything. But what if you don't like what she says?

Sounds of hotel phone rings.

Martha is answering the phone.

MARTHA (by phone). Hello?

Silence.

MARTHA. Hello?

Silence.

MARTHA. Hello? Jeff?

TOBY. It's me, Martha.

Pause.

MARTHA. Toby? Sorry, didnt recognize. The sound is very poor.

TOBY. Really? And I can hear everything perfectly. So who is Jeff?

MARTHA. Jeff is my friend. He just called recently, the conversation was interrupted, and I thought he was calling again.

TOBY. Are you cheating on me with him?

MARTHA. What?

TOBY. Dont pretend, Martha.

Toby sobs into the phone.

MARTHA. Toby, are you crying? Toby?

TOBY. Who is Jeff?

MARTHA. I'm sorry, I should have told you. I'm fine with you, but ... You're too vulnerable. You ...

TOBY. You love him? Who is he, this Jeff? Any rich old fart? You want just money?

MARTHA. Please, dont cry. That's why I couldn't leave you. I cant say anything, you take everything too much to heart.

TOBY. Is he better than me? He is older?

MARTHA. You see, there are people ... how to say it. There are people who seem to be on the surface, or something, but there are those that are in the depths. Ones, on the surface - they glide like a dragonfly. Easily. Nothing holds them. They are on the water. And other people – they are like fish, they are under water. And the water doesnt let them slide so easily.

TOBY. What a fish? What the water? What're you talking about, Martha?

MARTHA. Well, imagine, the fish that is in the depths, looks up, the weather is clear, there is no

wind, and she sees. Dragonfly. She glides so beautifully. It's curious for fish, because she can't get out of the water and slide on the water. And one time dragonfly notices the fish, she's curious about the depths, she wants to know how it will be in the depths. And they look at each other from different sides of the water, they are interested, but they can't be together, you see? They're always shared by this ... water. One is to plunge into the depths, the other has to rise to the surface.

TOBY. What kind of nonsense did you come up with? Why do we need these extremes? Why can't you find the middle?

MARTHA. It's different nature, you really don't see? For a while, fish and dragonfly can be together on a neutral strip, but not for long. Because the fish can live only under water, and the dragonfly can only glide over the surface. This water between them - like glass, even in summer, when it moves, it's as if the glass moves. They look at each other through this glass, as if they touch each other, although the glass is patched, and nothing can be done. If only ... If only one of them doesn't break this glass. This water.

TOBY. So, you are like a fish. And this Jeff is a dragonfly?

MARTHA. Yes. I always fall in love with dragonflies. All the time. But they don't need depth.

TOBY. Then why do you need it? Why do you need me?

MARTHA. Because only he can give me what I haven't in the depths.

TOBY. This is what?

MARTHA. Ease. I'd like to live easily, so that I won't be dragged to the bottom. So that I was weightless, not tied to the water.

TOBY. So live with your dragonfly.

MARTHA. Don't be angry, Toby.

TOBY. Why can't you decide who you want to be with? Why do you need two men? Are you normal? That's all - is this normal?

MARTHA. I'm fine with you, but in a different way. I love Jeff, sorry.

TOBY. And you feel bad with him, right?

MARTHA. No. It's simply impossible to be with him. Jeff says he loves me, and I get an electricity. And he himself believes in what he's lying about, you know? When we meet, and he says he's busy, that he'll reach the car and call me, he really believes in it. He really thinks so. I even like that he himself believes in his words, which he quickly forgets. But he doesn't call. Not when he gets to the car, or when he flies to New York. Just call and say some

words. Everything is fine. Just several words. Sometimes he remembers he loves me, and texts how he missed. That he often thinks about me. And then I'm shocked again. I always want to lie on his feet. Hugging his legs. He has long big legs, like a giant's. As if the whole world is on his legs. I never thought I could be so interested in men's legs. And this entire world is small for him, his body is small for him. As if a rainfall rolled into a liter jar. And in his eyes are sad, even when he smiles. Such a yearning, as if he drinks for two weeks. I can't resist him, you know? It's impossible. It's like standing on the beach, and a powerful hurricane is racing toward you. You can duck down, run, call for help, but it's useless - he just sweeps you away and that's it. But he is always there - above, always slips and can't stop. I can't even take offense at him for sleeping with others, because how to take offense at a man who was born, for instance, with short legs, this won't make them long. He does it simply, as easily a dragonfly slides on the water. You either accept it, or leave. But he can just take your hand and lead you out of the dark, even against your will. But I can't say him I love him. He doesn't want to live in London, and what can I do?

TOBY. And why you sleep together?

MARTHA. I didn't sleep with him, you know. (pause) Yes, we kiss, touch each other. I just think he's almost sixty. Maybe I'm the last young woman that will be in his life, you know? Just imagine, that you'll never touch or kiss anyone young? It's very scary. Highly. Always only wrinkles, rough skin.

TOBY. Do you think he hasn't anyone young? He has these young two in each city!

Jeff indignantly coughs.

MARTHA. Jeff always uses the same shaving gel, and I'm crazy about this smell. Simple shaving gel - but I'm going crazy. I don't regret my youth.

TOBY. Why don't you sleep with him then?

MARTHA. Then I will belong to him. I don't want it. Because I'll never be his. If I give myself to him, then I'll just be another body for him. And without sex - it's matter, it's more, you know? More.

TOBY. Do you think he'll put up with this for long?

MARTHA. And what? The longer, the happier? It's better to at least once come up and breathe this lightness - at least once in your life - for at least a few seconds, than sit all your life in the

depths and not know what it's like.

TOBY. I need you, Martha!

MARTHA. You need someone else.

TOBY. Wake up, open your eyes, you're in the swamp! Maybe it's time for you to finally come out of your depths?

Toby's throwing the hotel phone on the floor.

JEFF. She loves me, I know. I'm sure Martha is the love of my life, I feel it. I know she won't betray me, she'll always be with me. She just didn't know how to tell you. And now it's over, everything is clear. You know, I'm getting old, and all I need right now is Martha, it's just the meaning of my life. I don't have another woman. I don't want another woman! Where am I without Martha? I constantly think about her, and I'm even ready to move to London.

Toby sobs.

JEFF. Stop sobbing.

TOBY. I can't live without her.

JEFF. But she loves me, not you, just get it. Why do you need it?

TOBY. I love her. This creature. And she loves me. Just afraid to admit. She loves me anyway.

JEFF. You don't love her. It's still too early for you to love, youngster.

Toby pours a whiskey into glasses.

SCENE 4

JEFF. When will this blizzard end? Snow goes all the day.

TOBY. This blizzard will never end.

JEFF. I once got stuck in Milwaukee. The snow has set - a meter in height. My car stalled and I had to stand in the frost for a long time in a snowstorm. Not a single car passed by. I sat in the car for hours. So long that it seemed to never end. Then I thought, this blizzard is all I have. Only me and the blizzard. It's not so bad when you have at least that.

TOBY. I love when it's warm.

JEFF. I've noticed. (pause). And when I was sitting there, in this many hours blizzard, I understood something.

TOBY. The woman just left me, and you're talking about some blizzard.

JEFF. I'm talking about love.

TOBY. What do you mean?

JEFF. When I was sitting there in the car, in this blizzard, I realized this was all I needed, you know. Here I am. There's a snowstorm. Here's the car. Can there be anything more?

TOBY. Love.

JEFF. Love isn't outside, it's inside. Love was there - inside of me, when I was sitting inside this car, you see? Love is still inside me. It's not outside.

TOBY. It's all theory, in practice, you sit and drink, because it hurts.

JEFF. It doesn't hurt.

TOBY. You just say this way. You want to seem strong, but if you were alone in the room, you would cry, I'm sure.

JEFF. I never cry.

TOBY. How should I know?

JEFF. I'm not a flower like you. (pause) You know, never ask a woman if she loves ya. You won't like her answer anyway. Know why? Because everyone has his own understanding of love. The second such doesn't exist, whatever they say about the second half and other such nonsense.

TOBY. You just don't love anyone.

JEFF. Why? I love Martha.

TOBY. Even after what you heard?

JEFF. She said she loves me. I didn't hear anything new. Know why? Because I don't perceive love as salvation, as you do. I don't expect anything from people, so it's hard to disappoint. All that you expect from love is your expectations, and that's all. Why should they be justified? Why?

TOBY. It's not expectations, it's love as it is.

JEFF. And I'll tell ya how it is. Tell me about your first love. Come on, tell me.

TOBY. Why?

JEFF. I'm listening to.

The sound of a whiskey pouring in.

TOBY. It was at the university. Strange, but at school I didnt fall in love, although I wanted to, but I didnt like any girl. And at the lectures at the university, I saw Marie. Long golden hair. Petite. Slender. You know, when they say about princesses, they imagine such golden girls. I was even disgusted that I fell in love with such sugary beauty, that I pecked at all this.

JEFF. So, what's next? You went on dates?

TOBY. She noticed that I like her. You know, these looks, smiles. And I didnt even want this. It was enough for me that I see this beauty from afar. This overwhelmed me. And when she was talking to me, I was scared. As if this beauty will swallow me whole. And where then will I stay? Will I lose myself? She began to call me, and sometimes I hid from her, because I hadnt yet figured out what to do, how I should react. Now I think that I was afraid of finding this beauty. That I can get it so easily. But how is this possible? If it's such an endless beauty.

JEFF. Oh, these funny romance.

TOBY. And one day she called me on her birthday, I couldn't refuse. I came to her house with a gift. I gave her the book. But the thing was that she didnt have a birthday. She just wanted me to come. Can you imagine what a fool I looked then? I sweated like an idiot. I was so scared. What will she do with me now?

Jeff laughs.

TOBY. Nothing funny, really. We sat on the sofa, and she began to kiss me. I couldn't relax, I was afraid. It seemed to me her beauty would suck me, you know? That I find myself within this beauty, that beauty will swallow me up. Until that moment, I never thought that love could be so terrible. I thought that love is joy, it inspires, but then she chained me to the sofa. I couldn't move.

JEFF. Love isnt for cowards, boy. You have to be brave to love.

TOBY. What nonsense? Love can take everyone.

JEFF. No, love is given only to courageous ones.

TOBY. Did you mean this when you asked me about the first love?

JEFF. No. I wanted to say the first love is your role model. You know, there's such a thing. For instance, a person for the first time in his life heard the smell of pineapple, under certain circumstances. Let's say, it was raining. So, the first association with the smell will be transferred to the future. And in the future when a person hears a pineapple somewhere, he'll immediately remember the rain, even if the sun is outside. Even if there was never a rain in this area. It will still rain inside the person.

TOBY. But love isn't a smell.

JEFF. It's stronger than the smell. I mean there the first sensations work even more powerful. They are then very difficult to knock out by something, they always sit inside of you. It happens automatically, you can't control it.

TOBY. You're talking about love now, like some kind of instinct.

JEFF. Love is instinct. The survival instinct. That's why everyone wants love. They just want to live, you know?

TOBY. If you feel it, it doesn't mean the others feel the same. Perhaps, in your childhood, there was some kind of psychological trauma associated with love, or something. And it changed you.

Jeff laughs.

TOBY. What? Tell me now about your first love.

JEFF. What to tell? Everything is clear. It was in the kindergarten. We had sorta musical activity. You know, children sing songs, all that. And she, her name was Polina, went out into the middle of the hall alone. She was so small, in such a touching dress. And she began to sing. Just started to sing. And I realized that I loved her, although before that we had never even spoken to each other, didn't play together. She sang about the rainbow, about how the rainbow is high, how bright it is. I still remember this song. When I was in the car, in blizzards, then this rainbow song sounded inside me, although there was a blizzard around, you see what I mean? After the activity, I took her hand, we went for a walk, and I kissed her. The teacher scolded us, but we still played together. Then our parents were summoned to the kindergarten, and they explained to us that love can't happen so early, and all that. But we were friends anyway. And then Polina's parents moved their daughter to another kindergarten, and I realized that love is something that always escapes. I have it all the time. It always eludes. In my youth, and now. I'm even used to it.

TOBY. You just brought everything under your concept and that's it. You just prepare yourself in advance for the fact that love slips away, then not to worry. You invented this to protect yourself. This is such a way of self-defense. It's obvious. Imagine if there was no song about the rainbow, there would be no friendship with this Pauline, and you would have loved in your youth, it would be mutual and for all, everything would be fine.

JEFF. Have ya ever met this?

TOBY. No, but they told me.

JEFF. That is! They told me too, but I want to see it with my own eyes.

TOBY. My parents. They're together all their life.

JEFF. Happy?

TOBY. I dont know, but I think they are. One day my father left for a long time, and my mother was already going to divorce. They didnt communicate for a long time. But then he returned, and everything fell into place. It was somehow right. Neither she nor he asked each other anything. It was as self-evident, as if it should be that way.

JEFF. And you didnt ask your father where he was all this time?

TOBY. I tried, but he always escaped.

JEFF. Kinda weird anyway.

TOBY. Yeah, it was that he did like hiding something, that he didnt want to know what he was doing, while he wasnt with us. This meant, you dont have to ask him anything.

JEFF. My parents didnt speak to me very often. They sometimes asked how things were at school. They were very busy at work, it was difficult time, you know? I run away from home and hid in some basement, there were rats, it was scary, but I sat there all night. I had a flashlight. And then some guy climbed into the basement to repair the pipes, and they found me, called the police and took me to my parents. I was about ten years old. I then realized that my parents love me. It was stupid to run away. You know, a child always thinks he knows how it should be. That he can arrange everything in the best way. But this isnt that way. It's all kids dreams.

TOBY. I always thought I'd have one family for life, like my parents. But all my life I jump from one woman to another, I cant find either her or myself. I cant believe Martha did this to me, I believed her, although I thought she'd leave me. Actually, I felt it. I cant even be angry with you, I see that it's not your fault.

JEFF. What are you all humanists, youngsters? Dont you even want to hit me?

TOBY. No.

JEFF. Come on, hit me.

TOBY (laughing). I'm too drunk to hit you.

JEFF. Even if I say that I'm happy she chose me, not you?

TOBY. Even that.

JEFF. Listen, I know I shouldn't tell ya kinda stuff, but you need to find a woman who'll be nice.

You know, your woman should be nice, so you can relax and just love her.

TOBY. I'll handle my life without your old advice.

JEFF. Oh, I like it! The tension's growing up, you become a man.

TOBY. Shut up!

JEFF. Good!

TOBY. Dont start it.

JEFF. Wanna know why I'm so calm? I'd be even calm if Martha chose you, not me. Because to my 55 years, I realized that if something is yours, it will remain yours, and you dont have to worry, you know? But at your age I was also worried. I realized this only after a divorce with my first wife. She left me because she said that I occupy too much space and she doesnt have enough air. She needed a separate bedroom. We, of course, slept together, but after that she often went into the living room and slept there on the couch, you see? She said sleep is too intimate, and she doesnt want me to watch her sleep.

TOBY. And you didnt even try to keep her?

JEFF. Just then I tried to hold her, and after the divorce realized it was a mistake. You can never hold anyone back. Now I say the same thing to my son, I say it to you, but you snap.

TOBY. I cant imagine my life without Martha, I cant imagine it. You dont deserve her, you're too careless. Martha is much deeper than you. (pause) I wont give Martha to you.

The sound of the glass that Jeff puts on the floor.

Jeff's standing up and opening the window,

the sound of a snowstorm, wind.

JEFF. And what are ya gonna do, boy?

TOBY. The time will come, and you will know.

JEFF. How pathetic.

The sound of the glass that Toby puts on the floor.
Toby's getting up, going to the window and closing it.
The sound of the blizzard and the wind ceases.

TOBY. Too cold.

JEFF. How can you love if you are afraid of the wind?

SCENE 5

Morning, the same hotel room.
A long knock at the door.

JEFF (waking from sleep). Who else is there?

The sound of knocking again.

TOBY (getting out of bed). Why are you sleeping, and I have to open?

JEFF. You're younger!

The sound of Toby, opening the door of the hotel room.

THE VOICE OF THE HOTEL STAFF. Good morning, are you ok? We called the phone in your room, but it wasn't any answer, the same with mobile phones. The thing is, the weather is better, and the airport is working again.

TOBY. Morning, sorry, we just turned off all the phones to sleep. Thanks for the info.

THE VOICE OF THE HOTEL STAFF. Welcome. You can have breakfast before 11 o'clock. Have a nice day!

TOBY. Nice! Thanks!

The sound of the closing door.

JEFF. So, airport is open?

TOBY. Yeah.

JEFF. It's time to fly to Martha.

The sound of the opening by Toby window.

The sound of the street noise.

TOBY. The blizzard is over.

JEFF. My head hurts after yesterday.

TOBY. Everything is so white.

JEFF. I need to drink less.

TOBY. I haven't seen so much snow for a long time. The snow seems to clear.

JEFF. We must brush our teeth and have breakfast.

TOBY. No matter how dirty you are, snow is ready to clean everyone.

JEFF. What is there for melancholy in the morning, boy?

The sound of Jeff,

doing his morning water procedures in the bathroom.

JEFF (from the bathroom). Gonna for breakfast?

TOBY. No, I dont want to.

Sounds in the bathroom are quieting down.

JEFF (returning into the room). Why?

TOBY. I dont eat in the morning.

JEFF. Kinda youngster! (dressing) And I'm very hungry! What are you standing naked at the window?

TOBY. It's not cold here.

JEFF. I went for breakfast, and then they'll eat all yummy stuff. I'll be back. Dont fret here.

The sound of the closing door.

Street noise from the window.

TOBY (singing Bruce Springsteen). I was spinnin' 'round a dead dial, Just another lost number in a file, Dancin' down a dark hole, Just searchin' for a world with some soul, This is radio nowhere, is there anybody alive out there? This is radio nowhere, is there anybody alive out there? Is there anybody alive out there? I just want to hear some rhythm, I just want to hear some rhythm, I just want to hear some rhythm...

The water in the bathroom, then Toby is in the room again.

TOBY (talking to himself). Hello, Martha. I'm calling you to say ... No, it's not, it's stupid. Hello, Martha. Jeff doesn't love you at all, he has another woman, he said me that, it's true. No, it's so...so... untruly...Hi, Martha ... I heed just call her right now, just call!

Toby turn on the hotel telephone in the socket, dialing,
but Jeff's entering the room.
Toby put down the phone.

JEFF. Go breakfast, boy! They do an excellent omelet.

TOBY. Want to know the flight time, but the line is always busy.

JEFF. I need to collect my stuff. Turn on your mobile, they're breaking information about the time of flights. Martha texted she's waiting for me.

The sound of Jeff collecting his stuff.

TOBY. Jeff, give Martha my ring back. I don't want it to be with me anymore.

JEFF. Just throw it out and that's it.

TOBY. I can't.

JEFF. Just give it to me.

TOBY. What are you doing?

JEFF. I just threw the ring out of the window. (pause) Just don't say you are now running to look for the ring. Don't do this. Even when I'm gone, don't do it.

The sound of water - Jeff is in the bathroom,
then he returned into the room.

JEFF. You're still worried about Martha, right? Dont worry, boy, you'll find a good woman, I'm sure. Believe the old man, I know what I say!

TOBY. It's all right, thank you.

JEFF. Listen, here is my card, if you need anything or good whiskey, just call! You can call just like to chat, you know? You're a good guy, I see that. You're not rotten.

TOBY. Thanks, Jeff. I'll text you my number.

The sound of the opening door.

JEFF. Dont lose your heart, boy! Just live!

The sound of the closing door.

Jeff left the room.

The street noise sound.

Then - sounds of dialing, sounds of telephone rings.

VOICE OF THE MAN (from the Martha's phone). Hello? Hello? I dont hear you! Call me back, I cant hear you! Hello? You breathe too loudly!

TOBY. Hello, I need Martha Naryan.

VOICE OF THE MAN. Who are you?

TOBY. It's from the bank. I need Martha Naryan.

VOICE OF THE MAN. Martha's taking a shower. I can pass her information. (pause) Hello? Hello? I cant hear you.

TOBY. This is confidential information, I'll call back later or send her information by mail...

VOICE OF THE MAN. But me and my future wife will move soon, and we'll have a new mailing address. Just a second, I'll say you the postcode and the street...

Toby put down the phone.

TOBY (to himself). I just flew away from her, and she... Beast!

The sound of crying Toby.

TOBY. I hate you! Hate you!

Toby begins to crash furniture in the room,
everything falls.
Then everything fades away,
there is only the sound of street noise from the window.
The sound of mobile phone dialing.
Jeff's answering the phone,
on the background - the sounds of the road,
Jeff is in a taxi.

TOBY. Jeff..

JEFF. Yep?

TOBY. Jeff, I'm sorry I told you all this.

JEFF. Come on, boy. I know how you feel now, I experienced this myself, but it'll pass, believe me.

TOBY. I just want you to be all right. Just want to say..

JEFF. What? Bad sound, I'm in a taxi. Speak louder, boy. You dont have to worry about me, dude,
but you need to keep the tail with a gun! I tell ya!

TOBY. Yeah, I just want to say. You know, the blizzard always ends. Sooner or later it will end
anyway.

JEFF. Are you ok?

TOBY. Yeah, I'm good, Everything is good.

JEFF. Dont lose your heart, boy! Just dont lose your heart...

The cell phone beeps.

Translator Tobias Kite