

“RESHUFFLE”

“ROSZADA”

Pawel Mossakowski

Translated by E. Carter

SCENE 1

On the left side of the stage – Mr and Mrs Zytomirski’s apartment – nervous preparation for dinner are taking place. HALINA, 40 years old, with a stern look on her face, hiding behind glasses, sets the table.

HALINA Where is the fourth fork? Has anyone seen the fourth fork?

(looks off the stage) Adam! Can you help me find it?

ADAM (handsome 18 years old, comes out on the stage with an iPod in his ears) Excuse me?

HALINA I have lost a fork from the set. I don’t want to use the aluminium one.

ADAM Perhaps it fell behind the fridge after Easter lunch. Or, grandpa put it into his pocket by mistake?

HALINA Don’t get cheeky, look for it! (Adam disappears) Ludwik, put some music on!

LUDWIK (enters, 40 years old, wearing glasses, with a pipe in his mouth, knotting his tie) What?

HALINA I don’t know which to choose, Mahler or Bach.

ADAM (returning with a fork) I don’t know if it’s a good idea. I think they’re not used to that kind of music. They might think somebody in the family has died.

LUDWIK I think so too. Besides it isn’t a special occasion.

ADAM Exactly. What is this dinner for?

HALINA What do you mean what for? You have been going out with that girl for three months now. It would be nice to meet her parents.

ADAM I don't know if it's really necessary.

HALINA Of course it's necessary. Her mother thinks so too. We want to know what kind of family she comes from.

ADAM You maybe a bit disappointed. Her parents aren't that posh.

HALINA All the more reason to meet them.

ADAM Well... Agnieszka and I won't be joining you for dinner. We have things to talk about.

HALINA What?

ADAM Oh, just a few things.

HALINA Won't you come for coffee? Now, that really isn't on.

ADAM All right then.

SCENE 2

To the right side of the stage is Mr and Mrs Kepka's apartment. Edward, 45 years old and corpulent, sits in the armchair, talking on his mobile.

EDWARD What is it? 94? (low voice) Original numbers?

Enters ELWIRA, a pretty blond, well-groomed 40 years old. EDWARD speaks in a low voice.

EDWARD So buy it. I have to go. (switches it off)

ELWIRA Can you hurry up? We'll be late because of your phone calls.

EDWARD I have to see to my business! Anyway... do we really have to go?

ELWIRA You want to cancel? You must be mad.

EDWARD Well... We've have accepted their relationship, haven't we? And support it.

ELWIRA Do you have anything against Adam? He's handsome, well mannered...

EDWARD Yes, well mannered. But what kind of match is he? I have someone better for her in mind.

ELWIRA Gadek's son?

EDWARD Yes. Gadek said he's crazy about Agnieszka. He even writes poems for her.

ELWIRA So what?

EDWARD Well... Gadek being an MP could be very useful. He could arrange for me to be a representative of a brand car company...

ELWIRA I don't like Gadek. When he was here last he puked all over the sofa. Natasza couldn't wash it out.

EDWARD Natasza is lazy. It was only little soiled.

ELWIRA Whatever. Anyway... since we said we would go we have to go!

Enters AGNIESZKA, a very pretty 18 years old girl.

AGNIESZKA Listen, I don't want to hurry you but it's nearly seven o'clock.

EDWARD Oh... I was just talking with your mother... I don't feel too well, I've a tummy ache after that lunch with Wlosik. I won't eat any dinner.

AGNIESZKA So dad will only be drinking. And you shouldn't try to match make me with that stupid Gadek; nothing will come out of it.

EDWARD So you heard?

AGNIESZKA (shrugs) You were speaking too loud.

EDWARD What do you have against Robert?

AGNIESZKA A moron. He spends all his time in the gym.

EDWARD A man has to be sporty.

AGNIESZKA No... only muscles, that's all. I've to tell you Adam's mother is an excellent cook...

EDWARD (interested) Really? Let's go! (gets up)

ELWIRA By the way.... Have you talked to Lutek yet?

EDWARD (embarrassed) Lutek?

ELWIRA Lutek, the one from Polsat TV management. You were to talk to him about that cookery programme for me.

EDWARD Gee... I forgot.

ELWIRA Call him.

AGNIESZKA Maybe later...

EDWARD (quickly) Yes, yes of course... there's no time now.

SCENE 3

On the left side there are preparations for dinner.

LUDWIK What have you prepared?

HALINA Fish. It's Friday.

LUDWIK What fish?

HALINA A fish. Just fish. Probably hake. I didn't look properly.

LUDWIK Aha.

HALINA Why...?

LUDWIK Nothing... nothing... I was thinking you could prepare something better. They'll think we're poor.

HALINA If you earned more I'd prepare salmon. Though in my opinion such a dish doesn't agree with the rules of fasting. And since you earn what you earn we'll have hake.

SCENE 4

On the right side. EDWARD is tying his tie.

EDWARD Adam's father... What does he do exactly?

AGNIESZKA He's a scientist at the University.

ELWIRA At the University? Oh, Jesus... wait... (takes the "STYL" magazine for women and skims it) Books, books, yes... Grochola... her latest novel... (pulls a page out) I'll read it in the car.

EDWARD What's does he do at the University?

AGNIESZKA He's a biologist. Insects. Flies or mosquitoes, or something.

ELWIRA Flies? That's disgusting. What's does he do with them?

AGNIESZKA I don't know. He examines them.

ELWIRA How can you examine a fly?

EDWARD Is he a sort of... a vet?

AGNIESZKA No, he has a PhD. Soon he'll be a professor.

EDWARD A professor on flies and mosquitoes. Whatever next!

SCENE 5

The left side. The Zytomirski's apartment.

HALINA What does he do?

ADAM He trades second hand cars. He owns a few garages.

HALINA He must be a thief.

ADAM Why do you say that, mum?

HALINA They're all thieves.

LUDWIK (interested) Yes? Maybe he could find me something. My old Skoda hardly runs anymore.

HALINA Please, don't mix private life with business.

LUDWIK But my Skoda is private.

HALINA It's not fitting that you ask him for a favour. Besides don't exaggerate. It still runs all right.

LUDWIK Yeah? Don't you remember how it stopped near Nidzica when I was going to the etymologists' congress in Gdansk? I was nearly late for my lecture.

HALINA If you do, then he'd want you to do something for him.

ADAM What can dad do for him? Get him a job in a laboratory in his Institute?

LUDWIK Well... I still have many friends among my party colleagues.

ADAM (waving his hand) Your party, dad... it's not even in the Sejm.

LUDWIK They'll miss us... And besides as you know, some of my friends have joined other parties and still have a lot to say.

HALINA What're you talking about? It is not acceptable to talk about such things at the table.

SCENE 6

The right side. EDWARD takes a bottle of whiskey from his bar.

ELWIRA What do you need that for?

EDWARD I'll take it. I'm sure they'll have only wine. I know these scientists. That reader from the Polytechnic who earns extra dosh fixing those serial numbers...I mean while doing engine inspections, drinks only wine and more wine.

ELWIRA Please don't get drunk.

EDWARD (arches up) Oh! Don't worry.

ELWIRA You said the same before the party at the Pawels, when Wodecki was there. And what happened? You were so drunk, that you told him to sing “Maja the bee” in duet.

EDWARD Yes, I remember, I went a bit over the top.

ELWIRA A bit! Wodecki was outraged.

EDWARD Ok, ok. It was different with Pawel. He is a friend. I won't make a fool of myself this time. How much can a weakling like him, a specialist on flies drink? Half a litre at most.

ELWIRA When I say “stop”, stop. (rings Edward's mobile, Edward leaves) Don't talk much now. And what does his mother do?

AGNIESZKA She's teaches biology.

ELWIRA In your school?

AGNIESZKA No. Luckily no.

ELWIRA Why “luckily”?

AGNIESZKA Apparently she's terribly strict.

EDWARD (enters) What?

AGNIESZKA Demanding and stern, so please mother don't talk to her about cosmetics, massages, and plastic surgery.

ELWIRA O Jesus, what am I going to talk to her about?

AGNIESZKA And father, please don't swear. They are very polite.

EDWARD But, dear... among my friends we all swear.

ELWIRA Say gosh... or damn it.

EDWARD Damn it...damn it... oh fuck, I can't do it. Maybe I just won't say anything.

ELWIRA Absolutely not. They'll think you're some idiot or a moron. Say damn it. Practice in the car.

SCENE 7

Left side.

HALINA (sternly) They're late.

LUDWIK Halina, don't exaggerate. It's only two minutes.

HALINA It doesn't matter. But...

She is interrupted by a door bell. HALINA and LUDWIK go to the door, exit. ADAM is alone in the room.

HALINA (off) Please come in. The hall is rather narrow.

EDWARD (off, suppressed voice) Yes, a bit...

Enters ELWIRA. EDWARD with flowers and a plastic bag. AGNIESZKA, HALINA and LUDWIK. The guests look around the room, they are surprised it is so small.

HALINA Please come in... (shakes her hand with ELWIRA)
Zytomirska.

ELWIRA (low voice) Kepka...

HALINA Excuse me?

ELWIRA Kep... czynska.

EDWARD (shakes hands with LUDWIK) Edward. Nice to meet you.

LUDWIK Zytomirski. I mean Ludwik.

ADAM *greets AGNIESZKA warmly.*

ADAM Let's go to my room.

HALINA But don't close the door.

ADAM Mother, don't be like that.

LUDWIK Yes, yes... what do we have to hide?

(laughs alone, after a while ELWIRA and EDWARD join him. HALINA does not look convinced but capitulates. EDWARD hands her a bunch of flowers)

EDWARD Please, they're for the hostess.

HALINA *(simplers)* Oh, you shouldn't have. They must have cost a fortune.

EDWARD Not really. I took a whole bunch, so the florist gave me a discount. Just a minute... how much did I pay? *(checks this on his watch calculator)* Twenty five times six. Oh... only 150 zloty.

An awkward pause.

LUDWIK *(pointing at the calculator)* Oh... what a handy gadget.

ELWIRA Edward! *(to Halina)* My husband's always so exact...

HALINA *(cold)* Yes, I can see...nevertheless... they are very nice flowers. Ludwik, put them into a vase.

LUDWIK *(exits)* I don't know if we've a suitable vase.

HALINA Look for it. *(whispers)* There's a jar in the kitchen.

EDWARD (takes out whiskey) And this is for the professor.

HALINA (takes it quickly) Thank you. I'll put it away.

LUDWIK (stops) But...

HALINA We don't drink on Fridays. We fast. Maybe wine? I've bought a white Bulgarian "Sophia".

ELWIRA "Sophia"? Well... thank you. (hurriedly) I'm driving.

HALINA I understand. Please sit down. I'll see to the potatoes. (moves to the kitchen, Ludwik comes back from the kitchen)

ELWIRA Potatoes?

HALINA (stops) Yes, potatoes or spuds if you prefer. I don't use the word that sounds German.

ELWIRA I don't use spuds... I mean I don't eat them but... (stumbles and gives up. Ludwik points to her seat at the table. The three of them sit down)

EDWARD (to Ludwik) My wife usually eats only brown rice. But I'll have some with pleasure.

HALINA comes back with a tray with potatoes, cabbage and fish.

HALINA (puts the dishes down) Bon appetit!

EDWARD Looks very good. (takes a big portion of fish)

ELWIRA Edward!

EDWARD Oh sorry, It just looks so good...

ELWIRA Let me guess... sea bass.

HALINA (sitting down) No, hake.

ELWIRA (stunned) Ah yes... but it looks exactly like sea bass.

They put food on their plates. Eat for a while.

ELWIRA Very tasty. I'll have to get a recipe from you. I love cooking.

HALINA... Oh really?

ELWIRA Yes, even our maid Natasza is forbidden to be in the kitchen.

I make everything myself. Don't I, Edward?

EDWARD (heavily) Yes...

ELWIRA Maybe in autumn I'll have my own cookery programme on TV. Isn't that right, Edward?

EDWARD Yes, yes... I'll talk to Lutek.

Pause. One can only hear vulgar shouting of teenagers outside the window.

ELWIRA By the way... Have you read the latest novel by Wieslawa Grochola "A Moth Without Wings"? It's a very moving portrait of feminist tragedy... somewhat parallel to Manuela Gretkowska's vision, in the short story "I, Vagina"...

HALINA I don't read contemporary women's literature. I consider it be overrated. I prefer the classics: Konopnicka, Orzechowa.

EDWARD (happily) I know! But I haven't read a lot recently. You understand.... with three second hand car garages, lack of time. Only my wife has time for the written word.

LUDWIK I also mostly read books on my subject.

The conversation is drying up. Outside even more vulgar shouting.

HALINA Shall I close the window?

LUDWIK No, we will suffocate in here.

ELWIRA (after a while) Yes, living in a block of flats has its disadvantages.

HALINA Yes, unfortunately. (to her husband) Please, tell them off.

LUDWIK (gets up, goes up to the window) Excuse me, I say. Could you please talk a bit quieter or maybe change your phraseology? The acoustics are excellent and we can all hear you! (a beer tin is thrown through the window, Ludwik ducks)

EDWARD You don't do it that way. (gets up, exits)

HALINA Oh God, please be careful...

ELWIRA Don't worry, my husband has handled a lot worse.

LUDWIK (not sure) Maybe we should call the police?

ELWIRA What for?

EDWARD (off) Fuck you, fucking bastards... fuck off from here, or I'll shoot you. (a sound of shot)

HALINA Jesus!

Comes back EDWARD, sits down at the table.

EDWARD Well, done. (starts eating enthusiastically)

LUDWIK Excuse me... did I hear right... (whispers) You were shooting at them?

EDWARD ... shooting? I got a BB gun. (he gets the pistol from his pocket and demonstrates) I shot just once to frighten them. I recommend it. (he puts it back into his pocket)

LUDWIK (after a while) Yes... we'll think about it. (Halina is still silent, frozen)

ELWIRA Oh Jesus!

LUDWIK What has happened?

ELWIRA "Manuela"! (gets up) Please excuse me, "Manuela" is about to start on Channel 1. I forgot to tape it. Where's your TV? I'll sit down somewhere, watch it and I'll be back with you soon...

LUDWIK Well, it's a problem. We don't have a TV.

ELWIRA You don't have a TV?... you're joking...!

HALINA No.

ELWIRA But... they aren't expensive. You can buy one on instalments...

HALINA We don't watch TV for basic reasons. We simply don't like what it represents. When "Big Brother" reached top ratings, in protest we threw it out.

ELWIRA "Big Brother", I understand. I hated it when that Ken and Frytka did it in front of everybody. But... no TV?

LUDWIK I mean... Adam has a small TV in his room and I sometimes drop in there....

ELWIRA Oh, it's ok. (gets up, runs out, off) Oh pardon... excuse me, Adam.... I've heard you've a TV, can I watch something? I'll sit down in the corner.... Where is it? Aha... oh excuse me, I thought that was a mobile phone...

EDWARD (explaining) My wife can't live without a TV.

HALINA (cold) Yes, I can see. (gets up, takes the dishes to the kitchen)

LUDWIK (to Edward) I believe you work in the motor industry.

EDWARD Yes... I sell second hand cars...

LUDWIK And how are sales going in the times of this huge economic boom?

EDWARD Slow.... It's not like it used to be in the nineties. It used to be much better. Lots of shit was sold... I mean clients' expectations were low. (stops, whispers) Professor... can we get my whiskey out?

LUDWIK (whispers) Just a second... first tell me: do you have in your garage. (enters Halina, Ludwik stops, Halina sits down) We are just talking about Edward's work.

EDWARD (angry) Yes, we have just finished. I heard you work at the university?

LUDWIK Yes, in the biology department. I specialize in mating flights of male mosquitoes. You can't imagine how these allegedly primitive

creatures have such a complicated code of behaviour. In spite being so low in the hierarchy of the evolution of species, a blue bottle fly has unusually mature forms of coexistence.

HALINA Oh, Ludwik. He's still eating and perhaps he isn't interested.

LUDWIK Oh yes. Sorry. I always get excited when I talk about my work.

EDWARD No, no, it's very interesting. A blue bottle fly's mating... yes... And... your son...will be... will follow in your tracks?

HALINA Oh no. He'll study law.

EDWARD O, a very good choice...

HALINA We think so too. It's a subject which guarantees a versatile education in the humanities and a solid financial grounding.

LUDWIK And it doesn't exclude a university career.

HALINA Oh, please stop with your university career. You have one and what do we have? (to Edward) We would like Adam to have a better life than us.

EDWARD Yes, it's understandable. An excellent choice, very good.

HALINA Yes, there are so many crooks nowadays. He'll do great!

EDWARD Yes, yes... I could do with a... and when will he finish his studies? Well... I will be... (stops)

HALINA Excuse me?

EDWARD Nothing, nothing... something just occurred to me.

HALINA What plans do you have regarding your daughter?

EDWARD Well... I'll buy her a beauty salon or massage parlour. She must do something and not mess about as... (stops) some do.

HALINA Agnieszka wants to be a beautician?

EDWARD No, she'll only supervise the beauticians.

ELWIRA comes in crying.

LUDWIK What happened?

ELWIRA Vespuccio (sobs) killed Manuela with a dagger. (sits on the chair)

EDWARD My wife is very sensitive.

ELWIRA Sorry... but really that Vespuccio... such a crook... such a crook.

HALINA We're just talking about your daughter's future. She is going to manage a beauty parlour?

ELWIRA (amazed) What? Oh, Edward... you're really... (to Halina) My husband has very modest ambitions. No, oh, no! Agnieszka will apply for Drama School.

EDWARD What a... stupid idea. (to Halina) My wife drags her to some sort of auditions or something... But she never wants to go.

ELWIRA How come?

EDWARD She wasn't ill at all when you took her to that... "get your own back".

ELWIRA "Revenge", actually. What?

EDWARD She asked me to write a note.

ELWIRA Oh yes? They are not interested in all that.

HALINA No, on the contrary.. it's very interesting. Only... don't you think that our children's relationship is a bit risqué. Their plans for life are totally different. I can't imagine my Adam who is going to be a lawyer having a wife who's a beautician.

LUDWIK But they are not getting married yet.

ELWIRA What, beautician? Oh, Edward, you always mess things up. Agnieszka will be an actress. And she'll marry a lawyer. Adam could be looking after her contracts.

HALINA Nevertheless it appears to me, that their life ambitions can go in very different directions.

LUDWIK But, Halina...

EDWARD (stops him) And I... f... in fact... I agree with you entirely. It wouldn't be healthy if Agnieszka ran a business and looked after a student.

HALINA I agree. Especially that Adam will have only a small help from us for his studies.

ELWIRA (to Edward) You're talking about business again? Agnieszka will be studying too. They will make a nice couple.

HALINA Yes, but first you have to get a place at University. And as far as I understand your daughter is not the best student.

ELWIRA (hurt) Where did you get that from?

HALINA I have friends in most schools.

ELWIRA She has improved greatly recently. Her essays are much better now. Perhaps it's Adam's influence.

HALINA I suppose so. However...

ELWIRA Adam is a very clever boy, with such good manners.

HALINA (taken aback) Just a second... you know our son?

ELWIRA Of course. He comes around a lot. He helps her with her studies.

HALINA My son comes around to yours ? Just a minute... this needs to be clarified... (calls) Adam! Adam, come here!

EDWARD Yes, he comes over... Once he came over so f... blind drunk, that I didn't know if I should let him in or not. But my daughter begged me.

Enters Adam and Agnieszka.

HALINA Is this true that you were drunk?

ADAM Yes, I went to the pub with friends.

HALINA We'll talk about that later. But is it true that you meet... that you meet up at her house?

ADAM We have to meet somewhere. We can't here.

HALINA But there are other places... For example parks.

AGNIESZKA It's uncomfortable on a bench.

HALINA Excuse me?

ELWIRA Oh no, no. I wouldn't like them to meet in the parks. There's too many hooligans there. It's better at our place. Agnieszka has practically a whole floor to herself.

HALINA (to the couple) I didn't know that you knew each other so well.

AGNIESZKA Well... We have been going out for three months...

HALINA That's rather a short time.

AGNIESZKA But we understand each other. It's as if we have known each other for years. We're in bed and... (puts a hand over her mouth)

Ooops!

HALINA (stunned) Just a second... you have sex?

AGNIESZKA Yes... We are young and we like each other...

HALINA (icily) But having sexual feelings is not enough, young lady. Responsibility is important too.

ELWIRA I understand all that very well. But please don't worry. I've told her to use contraception. So there is no chance of an accident.

HALINA Accident? Are you talking about human conception?

ELWIRA I am talking...yes... yes... about getting pregnant.

EDWARD Me too, f... gosh... I think that sex at their age is not acceptable!

ELWIRA What? I had Aga when I was sixteen.

EDWARD Exactly! That was the consequence. (to Halina) I agree with you entirely I regret very much that I was unable to protect my daughter. But... I am a busy man, you understand... three car garages... and as you can see one can't depend on my wife in these areas.

ELWIRA (surprised) But you... (stops and waves her hand)

HALINA Can you say something?

LUDWIK Well... a teenagers' sex life is a very complex issue.

HALINA Oh, I knew I could count on you! No, no... I don't agree with them having sex. Absolutely not!

ADAM Well, bad luck, mum, we have decided to live together.

Longer silent pause.

HALINA What?

ADAM To live together. We wanted to... discuss the possibility...

(looks with reproach at Agnieszka) but since this has happened...

EDWARD Gimme a drink!

LUDWIK Me too. (gets up)

HALINA Stop! You won't be going anywhere! (Ludwik gets up obediently, Edward sighs heavily) Well... gentlemen... it is such a serious matter that we have to discuss it entirely sober. (to her son) I completely don't understand why you want to get married before your A-levels?

ADAM Who is talking about getting married, mother.

HALINA What? You just want to live together? Without getting married first?

EDWARD (to Agnieszka) Don't you have enough room at home?

AGNIESZKA But I don't want to live with you. I want to live with Adam. I want to have him only for myself. (cuddles up to him)

HALINA Oh no!

LUDWIK And how do you envisage this?

ADAM Actually we were counting on your help. That you could pay for our flat.

HALINA No! Definitely not! Adam to live with a girl without getting married!? And with this this... floozy!

ADAM (sharply) Mother!

ELWIRA (angry) Oh, excuse me! You won't be calling my daughter such names!

AGNIESZKA (disorientated) What is a floozy?

EDWARD I won't allow it either! To let such a have-nots have anything to do with my only daughter!

HALINA Have-nots?! We live frugally but decently, sir!

EDWARD And we don't? Nobody has caught me red handed yet. (to Elwira) We are going! Why should we be offended by such losers? They

have only three rooms and think they're so important and they won't even let me drink my own whiskey...

LUDWIK You know, if it depended on me...

HALINA Please! You are free to go! And take your flowers with you!

(runs to the kitchen, after a while comes back with the bunch)

EDWARD Ok, I'll take them. (looks at his watch) Maybe the florist hasn't closed yet... But she won't give me a full refund.

ELWIRA (pulling him) Oh, do come on!

The three of them leave.

SCENA 8

The left side of the stage. The Zytomirski apartment.

HALINA That's incredible! Did you hear that?

LUDWIK That the florist will return his money? I don't think so...

HALINA What do I care about some florist! I am talking about Adam's plan. (to Adam) I am sure it's not your idea, am I right? She must have come up with it...

ADAM That's not important, mother. I'll go and pack.

HALINA Pack?! You... you really want to move out?

ADAM (weary) Yes. I said so already.

HALINA Ludwik! Talk to him.

LUDWIK In my opinion, son, you shouldn't take such sudden decisions.

ADAM It is sudden to you. Because, before you decide on something, father... (waves his hand)

LUDWIK I'd simply think it through thoroughly.

ADAM We have been thinking about it for a long time. When we were at that "Bad religion" concert... I mean religious concert.

HALINA (to Ludwik) I told you not to let him go there. You have always been so liberal. Let's get to the point. I don't agree you move out from here and live in sin with such... a girl.

ADAM But, mother, it has already been decided.

HALINA Ludwik!

LUDWIK Ok. If you wish, you are welcome to. But you earn your own crust. Work to rent an apartment!

HALINA Are you mad? How come? And leave school or worse, study at night?

LUDWIK I only... (winks) you know, I only...

HALINA What's wrong? Have you had some kind of nervous reaction... (to Adam) Do you see, what you've done? Your father developed a tic!

LUDWIK (roars) I don't have a tic! (whispers) I just wanted him to realize his plan is totally unreal and will have its consequences.

ADAM You talk and I'll go.

HALINA No, I won't let you! (bars the door) Never!

ADAM Mother, please don't make a scene. If I don't go today, I'll go tomorrow. What, will you lock me up?

HALINA Yes, I will! I'll guard you. I won't let you go!

ADAM You won't let me go to school?

HALINA To school? Yes... of course, no... no! Tough luck! I'll write a note to school. I'll lock you up till you give up your stupid idea.

ADAM So I'll leave through the window. (Halina is silent) You can see for yourself that you're being stubborn.

HALINA (falls on her knees) Adam, I beg you! Beg you, for Christ's sake!

ADAM Mother, get up.

HALINA I'll buy you a good TV and a BDB player.

ADAM DVD, mother. No, I don't really need one.

HALINA You won't have to go to church on Sunday!

ADAM I don't go anyway.

HALINA We shall allow...

ADAM (stops her) Mother, please, get up. (Halina gets up from her knees and looks at Ludwik in a meaningful way)

LUDWIK (clears his throat) Adam, let's talk seriously.

ADAM I talk seriously all the time.

LUDWIK (sits him in the armchair) Adam, let's sit down. Your girlfriend has financial demands. She'll leave you and you will suffer.

ADAM Oh, I see what you're saying. I'll take it into account.

Nevertheless I want to try. You, did when you met mother...

HALINA That was different. We met in the first year at University and got married after four years attending of lectures together. Remember, it was wonderful.

LUDWIK (meaningfully) Hmm...

ADAM But, mother, when was that?... We live in different times now.

HALINA Different, yes, different. And I don't like this new country at all. I did not fight for this Poland.

ADAM How did you fight?

HALINA I went to all the masses for the country. My knees were hurting. Your father had to massage them.

LUDWIK Yes. I wasn't fighting. I kept away from politics. The animal world seemed more interesting than the human one and it is still so.

ADAM I agree with you. But why insects?

LUDWIK There was a position going only in entomology. And I wanted to stay at the university.

ADAM I understand... Ok, we've had a chat... but now... (gets up, goes to his room, Halina starts crying) Mother, please don't cry.

Everything will be ok.

LUDWIK I think you'll be back. Sooner than you think.

ADAM (turns back) Certainly not.

SCENE 9

The right side of the stage. The Kepka's apartment.

EDWARD Absolutely no! Fuck, no way! From tomorrow you are to start dating Robert Gadek!

AGNIESZKA That moron?! Never! He's either in gym or watching speedway racing on TV.

EDWARD It's a very spectacular sport.

AGNIESZKA No. I want to live with Adam.

ELWIRA Can we postpone this discussion for twenty minutes? "Esmeralda" is about to start.

EDWARD That broke loser! What can he give to you? His parents are not exactly high earners. And don't you count on me.

ELWIRA I don't have anything against him. But after how we were treated by his parents... Especially that devout...

AGNIESZKA What do they have to do with it? Adam has told me recently that he doesn't want to live with them.

ELWIRA Though on the other hand... it is so romantic. I watched a similar storyline in "Dominika".

EDWARD Romantic! You're totally confused... thanks to watching all those sitcoms. No! We have already decided with old Gadek. You will have a beauty salon and he will run a gym next door.

AGNIESZKA I am not interested in beauty salons.

EDWARD And what are you interested in?

AGNIESZKA To be with Adam.

EDWARD (after a thought) A lawyer, good profession, I don't deny that. I could do with a son-in-law who is a lawyer... just in case... (spits for luck)

ELWIRA Don't spit on the carpet.

EDWARD Had to.

ELWIRA You did that yesterday too and Natasza slipped.

AGNIESZKA But Adam doesn't want to be a lawyer. It's his parents's idea.

EDWARD What does he want to be?

AGNIESZKA A reporter.

ELWIRA (lively) On TV?

AGNIESZKA No. For a newspaper. Or a writer.

EDWARD (roars with laughter) A writer? A writer? Ha! It's better that he's a lawyer.

AGNIESZKA I'll go and pack.

ELWIRA Are you serious...?

AGNIESZKA Of course. I'm meeting Adam soon.

EDWARD Let her go. Let her go. She'll come crawling back! (to Elwira) And don't give her any money!

ELWIRA But, Agnieszka! Tomorrow you have an audition. You'll forget. Oh, Jesus! (gets up) "Esmeralda"!

AN INTERVAL

SCENE 10

Right side of stage. A small apartment, nearly a bedsit, where Adam and Agnieszka live. Left - Off there is a baby crying, right- a couple quarrel. Enter Adam in a company cap "Polburger", he gets a packet out of his jacket. Agnieszka is sitting at the desk and doing her homework. She doesn't hear him come in. She jumps up when she sees him.

AGNIESZKA Oh, Jesus... you frightened me. I didn't hear you come in. (gets the plugs out of her ears, they kiss)

ADAM What do you have in your ears?

AGNIESZKA Plugs... (a vague gesture towards the wall) You know... a bit difficult to concentrate...

ADAM Aha... I've brought you hamburgers for dinner.

AGNIESZKA Again?

ADAM (slight irritation) We don't serve anything else. I was nearly caught by the manager. Don't complain.

AGNIESZKA Oh, no... it's good nourishment... I wondered how I'll jazz them up today? I've had them with paprika, maybe with basil?

(Adam shrugs) Are you tired?

ADAM Yes.

AGNIESZKA After you've relaxed... can you help me at my essay?

ADAM At my essay...? Not "at". With. What subject?

AGNIESZKA Does capitalism exploit us? Give examples from life and literature.

ADAM Oh, I'll write it, sure!

AGNIESZKA But don't put grease on my copybook because last time that baldie one gave me lower marks. Besides I think she hates me. I don't know why...

ADAM I have my suspicions.

AGNIESZKA Yes...?

ADAM She's my mother's friend.

AGNIESZKA O Jesus... do you think that... Oh God! And if she doesn't let me take my finals?

ADAM She will, she will.. I'll make sure of that... I'll write this essay for you. But then... (pulls her towards him and kisses her, Agnieszka moves away from him, a bit hurt) What? Ah, I understand... I smell of oil again...?

AGNIESZKA No, no... only a bit. You smell... so warm.

ADAM I'll go have a bath.

AGNIESZKA Ok. Only...

ADAM Only what?

AGNIESZKA There is no hot water.

ADAM Again? Well... I'll have to wash in the cold then... (leaves for the bathroom. Agnieszka starts doing her homework, but her mobile rings)

AGNIESZKA Yes? Hi, mother... No, fine... I went to school, Adam works... He works in the food business... Where we live...? We have rented a nice flat on the other side of the Wisla.. No, it isn't Saska Kepa, but fairly close. Yes, three rooms, high standard... view of the cem... the park... a bit sad, but nice... very nice neighbours... Yes, everything is good... What "Old fairytale"? What wench? Mum, I've already told you I won't be going to any auditions.

Oh, don't cry... don't cry, Yes, I heard it didn't go very well for you, I know... try again... No, no, definitely, I won't go... (Adam comes back)
Bye.

ADAM approaches her and kisses. AGNIESZKA kisses him, but after a while moves away.

AGNIESZKA Adam...

ADAM What? I still smell?

AGNIESZKA No, no... I mean yes, but... Listen... who was that girl, that red head who was standing to your left?

ADAM (surprised) You came to my work?!

AGNIESZKA I wanted to check how it's going...

ADAM Oh!

AGNIESZKA Who is she? You seemed to be a bit busy with her...

ADAM Goska? She's just some provincial moron. An idiot. She works there as she's the manager's niece. I with her...?

AGNIESZKA You appeared to be very interested in each other...

ADAM Oh, stop it. Goska and I?

AGNIESZKA Are you sure?

ADAM Positive.

They lie on the bed, kiss. Agnieszka still with hesitation.

ADAM (moves away) Do I still smell...? (sits down) I'll have to go back to being a courier.

AGNIESZKA Oh, don't even bother. After your first day you couldn't even get up. You were stiff, like a corpse. I had to help you to the bathroom, don't you remember?

ADAM Perhaps leaflet distribution?

AGNIESZKA We won't even be able to pay the rent. No, don't give this up. Well... you smell quite nice...

They start kissing. Somebody bangs the ceiling. They're distracted.

ADAM (with despair) She's flattening the chops again?

AGNIESZKA Yes... I told her so many times not to do it on the floor but she says her table is wonky.

They try to kiss. A quarrel next door is louder.

VOICES (male) You, fucking bitch...(female) and you, motherfucker...
go to work... (male) I can't go to work ...you get yourself a new lover
when I'm out!

ADAM Wait... (gets up, switches the radio on, very loud, lies down
next to her, they kiss again, banging to the door, they stop)

A NEIGHBOUR (bangs on the door, off) Why is your music is so loud?

ADAM It isn't ten yet!

NEIGHBOUR (off) Silence! My kid can't sleep.

ADAM (angry, gets up) I'll put him to sleep in a minute! I'll...

AGNIESZKA (stops him) Leave it, Adam, it's useless (Adam sits down
on the bed, they sit for a while, Agnieszka gets up, turns the music down)
We have to get out of here...

ADAM To go where? It's a miracle that drunken gravedigger rented it
out to us without a deposit. If he wouldn't have been so drunk, he
wouldn't have agreed. What can we rent for five hundred zloty? (tries to
embrace her)

AGNIESZKA (moves away) You know, what? Better write that essay,
and I'll go to fry the hamburgers (gets up, goes to the kitchen) Maybe I'll
have them with cinnamon. (leaves, Adam is alone. He feels hopeless,
from the left a baby is crying, on the right still quarrelling) We have to
move out...

SCENE 11

Left side of stage. The Zytomirski apartment. Halina sets the table for two. The door bell goes. She goes to the kitchen.

HALINA (off) Please... please... come in. You understand, my neighbours. I don't want them to gossip. My husband isn't in and...
(comes back with Edward)

EDWARD Where is your husband...?

HALINA He's in the States, he got a scholarship. Near Louisiana's swamps. He's recording the mating dance of Louisiana mosquitoes.

EDWARD I understand.

HALINA (nervous) This situation is a bit embarrassing for me but you didn't want to meet me in a neutral place...

EDWARD You know... I have had enough of neutral places... I am in such a place every day... And your fish was...

HALINA Yes, I understand... I'll serve dinner in a minute. I have made pork chops.

EDWARD Pork chops? Excellent.

HALINA Please sit down. (he sits down) I hope you don't hold a grudge after our last meeting? We were upset. We went over the top. It all happened so fast...

EDWARD Well... it wasn't nice... but fish... finger licking good!

HALINA Thank you. I'll serve right now. (goes to the kitchen, his mobile rings)

EDWARD Yes? (whispers) So take that Renault's number plate. (enters Halina with food) I can't talk now. (switches it off, to Halina) Sorry, business...

HALINA I understand. (puts food on the table, they help themselves, start eating) So... let's talk. I wanted to meet you as you appear to be a reasonable man... My husband went abroad and left me with all these problems. Anyway... he has no influence on Adam. A good man but a bit of a nincompoop.

EDWARD (swallows hard) Yes, I've noticed.

HALINA So in this situation I thought that you can do something about it... solve it. Adam, as I know from my friend... left school. They live somewhere in that awful area, in Brodno. Please understand. I don't have anything against your daughter, it seems to me she isn't the best match for him. She certainly is financially demanding...

EDWARD (eating) Oh, yes, yes...

HALINA Exactly. And my son has inherited a lack of entrepreneurial skills after my husband. And he needs to finish his A-levels. So you agree with me that something has to be done?

EDWARD Of course. She shouldn't be bothering with such a hopeless case? Besides Gadek is putting pressure on me.

HALINA (doesn't understand) What pressure?

EDWARD Nothing. No matter.

HALINA Please try to convince your daughter to come home. Then Adam will come back too.

EDWARD You're right. I'll talk to her. It's been too long. That boy suffers...

HALINA Who suffers?

EDWARD Robert... no matter. This pork chop is really very good.

HALINA Really? Thank you.

EDWARD Fantastic... my wife is so fussy about food.

HALINA Yes? Didn't she want to have her own cookery show on TV?

EDWARD Yes, she tried... but the trial recording sessions didn't go too well. She tried three times. She was very upset about it all.

(On other side Elwira is visibly upset: she's crying, sobs into a pillow)

HALINA Sorry to hear that.

EDWARD Yes... I'll tell you a secret. Her cooking is terrible. That's why I eat in restaurants.

HALINA *(sly)* If you can make it, you're invited for dinner. I'll make liver. It's my speciality. *(continues eating)*

SCENE 12

Adam's and Agnieszka's flat. Agnieszka does her homework. A knock on the door. She gets up and opens the door.

AGNIESZKA *(off)* Dad?

EDWARD (enters) Oh, Jesus! For god's sake! (he looks around with disbelief)

AGNIESZKA (after him) What are you shouting about?

EDWARD And you live in this dump? I would expect anything but this...?

AGNIESZKA It'll do for us.

EDWARD O Jesus...

AGNIESZKA How did you find me?!

EDWARD I followed you from school. O Jesus! I can't believe, my daughter...

AGNIESZKA Why? It has its plus sides.

EDWARD Stop it! What nonsense! Pack up. We're going home.

AGNIESZKA No! I prefer to live with Adam in this... (stops) in this modest bedsit than with you.

EDWARD Agnieszka... listen. The situation is serious. Mum is upset that you don't go to auditions any more. Robert is crying too. Rings up and says he's waiting. His father threatens that I won't get that dealership. And that woman cooks so well...

AGNIESZKA I don't know what you're talking about. Anyway... I'm not coming back home... I don't want to watch mum watching TV all the time and you ringing sex lines...

EDWARD Shhh... (looks around, whispers) How did you know?

AGNIESZKA I have seen the bills. (Eddie pauses) And now leave me alone, I'm studying.

SCENE 13

The Zytomirski flat. Edward sits with Halina at the table. They eat mince meat patties.

HALINA And?

EDWARD Hard work. She's stubborn. She has been pretty brainwashed by your son. She said she appreciates her home but love is stronger.

HALINA So what is next? Perhaps... you can try to talk to Adam? He doesn't want to talk to me.

EDWARD Gladly. I'll talk to him.

HALINA But please don't be too stern. He's a sensitive boy.

EDWARD I'll talk to him, I will...

SCENE 14

Adam's and Agnieszka's flat. Adam and Edward stand in the middle of the room.

EDWARD Let her come back home.

ADAM I don't keep her here under lock and key.

EDWARD If I could I'd knock you out... but I promised your... no matter anyway.

ADAM We'll move out soon.

EDWARD Yes, I'll see to it. Listen, son... I propose a deal. I'll give you ten thousand zloty and you'll leave her be. (gets the money out)

ADAM Excuse me?

EDWARD Ok, fifteen.

ADAM Please leave.

EDWARD Listen, she won't be able to stick it out. She'll leave you. At least you'll have money to start a business. You won't have to go back to your parents, rent a nice flat, and start writing...

ADAM Please leave.

EDWARD Tough negotiator you are. Twenty. My condition: you won't so much as even look at her. If you break our deal, I'll tell her about our little agreement.

ADAM Get lost!

EDWARD Yes? Speak to me like that... (restrains himself) Ok. You'll see.

SCENE 15

The Zytomirski flat. Halina and Edward at the table. They eat veal.

EDWARD (swallowing) There are problems. I have talked to him... but he's a toughie.

HALINA So what shall we do?

EDWARD I'll send "Bonzo" and "Little" round... I mean my mates.

HALINA And?

EDWARD They'll talk to him... they will make it all a bit clearer.

HALINA What? You want to send some thugs to beat him up?!

EDWARD Not exactly thugs... nobody was able to prove anything to them. They were only warned and cautioned. And I'm not saying beat him up... just frighten him a little...

HALINA No, no... it's out of the question.

Edward's mobile rings. He answers.

EDWARD Yes... (he's frightened) He had a crash?! O Jesus! Oh God! He's been arrested? O Jesus... No... it no matter now.

He switches it off. He is very upset.

HALINA What's happened?

EDWARD Tragedy. Gadek has been arrested.

HALINA That MP? You said he had immunity.

EDWARD They'll take it away. Do you still have that whiskey? I need something stiff.

Halina takes the bottle out and a glass. He grabs it, pours and drinks it in one go.

HALINA Careful. Why will they take it away?

EDWARD He was drunk and ran into the Sejm's gate. He smashed the barrier.

HALINA They do worse things and get away with it.

EDWARD And he ran into a man.

HALINA He will have a good defence.

EDWARD No, he won't. That man is the Speaker. He was jogging.

HALINA Well... I see...

EDWARD (with despair) I was to do business... such good business.

He was to fix the dealership for me ... luxurious Russian Wolgas. I'd have a brilliant business and not these shitty garages! Do you know how difficult it is to sell second hand cars? And how hard I have to work!

Everybody with a decent head on their shoulders have gone to the UK!

And those who haven't, don't get anything. I say: change the numbers, and an idiot rewrites them with a ball pen in the registration documents!

(stops) No matter anyway! And what for? The wife constantly watches TV. It's good we have two, otherwise I couldn't watch the wrestling....

(tipsy) I'll tell you a secret: I don't have much work at all. But I can't stand being at home. My wife gets on my nerves so much, so much...

that... I have to leave and stay outside as long as I can get away with it. I have to practically escape from home. (nearly crying)

HALINA Well... I don't have much to talk about with my husband. He only talks about flies or mosquitoes.

EDWARD I pity you... besides why don't you address me by my first name. Let's drink to it!

HALINA But I don't drink.

EDWARD But... the exception...

HALINA Ok. (pours herself) I'm Halina.

EDWARD Edward... (again upset) Oh God, Gadek has been arrested.

HALINA I understand you... I mean your concerns. But... I hope, in spite of new circumstances you won't stop...

EDWARD What? Ah... this... it has no importance to me any more.

Everything has gone. (nearly crying)

HALINA (shocked) So... you will let them live together?

EDWARD (drunk) Let them live as they want! Let them taste the hard life!

HALINA You're drunk.

EDWARD Soon they will have had enough!

HALINA I can't wait any longer. Adam has already lost three weeks and it's an important year of A-level exams.

EDWARD He'll catch up. He's a clever boy.

HALINA No, no... (cold) Well... if you give up... (points at the plate) Have you finished?

EDWARD (becoming sober) Halina, what has happened?

HALINA Nothing. I thought you were a real man. But I'm disappointed. Please treat this dinner as our last one.

EDWARD What? Did I say I give it up? No way! I was only thinking out loud that they won't stand that shit for long. But of course I'll do something about it.

HALINA Sure?

EDWARD Sure... sure...

HALINA (after a while) I believe you.

EDWARD Ok. You know, Halina, I feel that thanks to our common problems we have become close... somehow.

HALINA It's true... I feel it too.

EDWARD (comes closer to her) You, Halina, you're quite an attractive woman. If you looked after yourself, bought some contact lenses... (tries to kiss her)

HALINA (turns her head away) Oh... what... what are you doing, Edward... and my husband?

EDWARD (passionately) Halina...

HALINA No, no... it would be a terrible sin.

EDWARD Don't be such a... (tries to kiss her again)

HALINA No, no... only when you do as I wish.

EDWARD I'll do it.

SCENE 16

ADAM's and AGNIESZKA's flat – it is not the same horrible bedsit as before but a nice and specious flat. They're standing now in the middle of it. They look around happily.

AGNIESZKA And?

ADAM Excellent.

AGNIESZKA Isn't it? I'm so happy, so happy. (embraces Adam and kisses. But he is a bit reserved) What?

ADAM Nothing, nothing... how did you get it?

AGNIESZKA It belonged to some friends. They were going to Ireland so I asked them to leave it to us.

ADAM And that's why you signed an agreement with them?

AGNIESZKA Yes, they are very formal.

ADAM (shakes his head, doesn't believe her) Where did you get the cash from?

AGNIESZKA I had some left in my account. For a rainy day.

ADAM The real rainy day was there, in the other bedsit. If you had that money you would have taken it then! Don't lie!

AGNIESZKA Ok, mother gave it to me.

ADAM No... I don't believe you. You said that after that unfortunate visit she has objected to our relationship.

AGNIESZKA I have convinced her otherwise.

ADAM (doesn't believe her) You're talking nonsense...

AGNIESZKA (at last) Ok. I have a DVD with her recording.

ADAM What?!

AGNIESZKA I'll show it to you.

She takes it out, puts it in, switches it on. We can see Elwira in a white apron standing at kitchen table.

ELWIRA (from the screen) Dear ladies and gentlemen! Welcome to our new cookery show. Today I am presenting food... I mean how to prepare food... I mean not food in general but how to make an onion salad "Trouve de Bias"... We take an onion (an onion rolls off the table on to the floor) oh excuse me, these onions are so round... (bends forward, picks it up, wipes it with a sleeve) well... we have it here... we chop it... (cuts her finger) O Jesus... a doctor, is there a doctor here? My finger!

Agnieszka switches the video off.

AGNIESZKA It gets even funnier, but that's enough of that.

ADAM What?

AGNIESZKA I said I would enter it into the competition.

ADAM What... you're blackmailing your own mother?

AGNIESZKA Not blackmailing... I'm protecting her from being ridiculed.

ADAM No, no... it can't be... we had a different agreement.

AGNIESZKA A lot of things were supposed to be different. And what... we were to live in that awful pit? We wouldn't be able to get anything different. How much do you earn selling hamburgers?

ADAM Ok, I'll get a different job.

AGNIESZKA And what will you be doing?

ADAM Nothing much, but I'll be able to earn some money.

AGNIESZKA But what?

ADAM I'll be a waiter in a club. I have already found one...

SCENE 17

The Zytomirski's flat. Halina is alone, she is on the phone.

HALINA Nice flat? But where from? Your wife forbid you to interfere?

I must say, Edward, I'm very disappointed. Very... no, no... in such situation dumplings won't be on the menu. No, there's nothing to talk about... Goodbye. (she puts the receiver down)

SCENE 18

ADAM'S and AGNIESZKA'S apartment. Agnieszka is gloomy.

ADAM I'm simply tired.

AGNIESZKA (sneering) Yes, I understand... waitering is a hard job.

ADAM You bet. I'll run from one table to the other...

AGNIESZKA Pity, I can't see it.

ADAM Oh Jesus, I have already told you.

AGNIESZKA Why can't I come to the club?

ADAM I'd be embarrassed. Besides it's a secret one.

AGNIESZKA Secret?

ADAM You know, you sign an agreement...

AGNIESZKA So no one can see you there...? When you go on stage naked.

ADAM Not naked but in G strings. (stops) How did you know?

AGNIESZKA You cheat! You work as a strip teaser! You dance half naked and crazy women put money into your pants!

ADAM How did you know?

AGNIESZKA My mother saw you there.

ADAM Yes, actually... it seemed to me that I knew that face from somewhere...

AGNIESZKA She put ten zloty in your pants.

ADAM Frankly speaking, she could have put a bit more.

AGNIESZKA And that's all you have to say? You work as a male gigilo!

ADAM Not a gigolo! I always liked to dance. And if they give me money for it...

AGNIESZKA I don't want such money.

She starts packing.

ADAM What are you doing?

AGNIESZKA I'm moving out. I can't live with a man who sells his body.

ADAM So... is it better to live from blackmailing your mother?

AGNIESZKA I don't know, I don't know anything anymore... It wasn't meant to be like this. You were supposed to write...

ADAM When can I write, I am either frying hamburgers or doing your homework?

AGNIESZKA Exactly.

ADAM What?

AGNIESZKA And teachers are constantly having a go at me... it must be your mother's doing. I might not pass my exams.

ADAM Well... in that case, you'd better go.

AGNIESZKA I'm sorry, Adam.

ADAM is silent. Agnieszka leaves.

SCENE 19

Left side of stage. The Zytomirski apartment. Halina and Edward are at the table.

HALINA You're wonderful! How did you convince her?

EDWARD Well... it took a long time but her father's authority prevailed.

HALINA Oh, you're wonderful.

EDWARD Yes... (embraces her)

HALINA (slips out) Oh, no... no... and if Adam comes back?

EDWARD Exactly... I have put it right. You said...

HALINA And if he comes back home this minute? And sees us in this compromising situation? No, no... (Edward moves away. He is angry)

But instead I'll bring you some delicious liver.

Edward is not satisfied.

SCENA 20

Adam's flat. As before. He is talking to his mother.

HALINA Why aren't you coming back home? Now when that floozy has left you...

ADAM Left me? We parted with mutual consent.

HALINA It doesn't matter. It's good that you have broken up. So there's no reason not to come back home.

ADAM There is. You.

HALINA I don't understand.

ADAM I don't want to come back home and watch how you treat dad and how he lets you get away with it!

HALINA What... I treat your father badly? Don't exaggerate. He is always fed. Well... sometimes... I mention his low earnings, so what? Sometimes I feel I deserve a better life... (Adam is silent) Ok, I'll treat him better. I won't call him a loser. (Adam waves his hand) I won't let him even feel...

ADAM No.

HALINA (after a while) Adam, you are bitter... upset about your break up... you shouldn't be alone.... You really ought to come back home.

ADAM I am not upset. Well... of course it isn't nice. But tough luck. It was just an excuse to leave you. I won't come back home.

HALINA (after a while) Ok, ok. But will you start going to school again?

ADAM No, what for?

HALINA What do you mean? To pass your finals, to study law...

ADAM I have other plans.

HALINA What plans? But what will you do now? What are you up to anyway?

ADAM It's best you didn't know, mother.

HALINA Why? Speak up. I can take it... I used to be a girl guide.

ADAM Well.... (leans towards her, whispers in her ear)

HALINA Are you joking? You're kidding me, aren't you? (Adam shakes his head. Halina faints)

ADAM Didn't I tell you? (tries to revive her) Mother, mother! (Halina comes round) You should not be so upset, mother. It's only temporary. You'll see... One day you'll be proud of me.

HALINA (pushes him away, gets up) Don't touch me. (dramatically) I have just lost my only son... Let it be...

She leaves. Blackout. We hear voices in the darkness.

EDWARD Halina...

HALINA (with a sigh) Ok, ok. But switch off the light.

INTERVAL

SCENE 21

The Zytomirski's apartment. Halina is busy at the table. She wears contact lenses. Enters Ludwik with suitcases, he's all in bandages.

LUDWIK I'm home, darling.

HALINA O Jesus, what happened? (kisses him on cheeks)

LUDWIK I was bitten by Louisianan mosquitoes in the swamps.

Exceptionally nasty ones. But it's nothing, they'll heal. I have brought you an original costume from the Mississippi basin and a local statue of Christ. (he takes out presents) And a big model of the golden fly (takes out a large and ugly model of a fly) Look, doesn't it have a splendid spread of wings?

HALINA (takes it with disgust) Yes, very wide. Shall I put it here? (puts it on the cupboard)

LUDWIK Where are your glasses?

HALINA I've bought contact lenses. (takes other presents) Thank you.

LUDWIK Adam is not here yet? I have some Indian Navaho music. Very interesting sounds.

HALINA Adam... well... he isn't here. And said he wouldn't be coming for some time. He has decided to become independent.

LUDWIK What is he doing? (Halina leans over to him, whispers to his ear for a while. Ludwik listens with interest.) Are you kidding?

HALINA No.

LUDWIK Well... well... He was always good at dancing. I don't know who he takes after but he always danced very well.

HALINA Is that all you can say? Our son is, excuse me, prostituting himself and you're talking about his dancing capabilities...?

LUDWIK You yourself sent him to ballet classes. Although he used to cry...

HALINA There is a difference! (Ludwik is silent) Your attitude confirms my decision.

LUDWIK What decision?

HALINA I... (shy) have met somebody.

LUDWIK (very surprised) You...? (after a while) No, you're joking...

HALINA Unfortunately not.

LUDWIK Who is he?

HALINA A businessman. Serious, responsible, financially secure, enterprising...

LUDWIK I don't believe it.

HALINA I know. You can't believe it either. But it's happened. You were away so long... and I... No, you don't have to tell me that it's immoral and sinful. The priest has already told me so. But... I want to live with him. Adam has disowned us, I can't see any sense for us to be... Can you forgive me?

LUDWIK Well... I forgive you.

HALINA (puts her hands around his neck) Really? I always knew you were a gentleman.

LUDWIK You know... if it's real love... I won't stand in your way...

HALINA I knew I could always count on you. Maybe I shouldn't tell you this... when you're so terribly hurt but...

LUDWIK No, no... it'll heal. I'm glad you told me.

HALINA Believe me it wasn't an easy decision.

LUDWIK Yes... I understand. And what about Adam? (he isn't sure)
Maybe I should talk to him?

SCENE 22

The Zytomirski's flat. On the table some test tubes, laboratory utensils, somebody is doing some research. Enter Elwira and Ludwik.

ELWIRA I'm sorry that I invited myself over to your place...

LUDWIK No, no... please come in. Coffee, tea?

ELWIRA I'd prefer something stronger...

LUDWIK There is some whiskey left. Is that ok?

ELWIRA Yes, please... (Ludwik pours) I think you already know about Eddie and your wife?

LUDWIK Yes. I did my research.

ELWIRA Edward... has moved out. They live in a villa in Sadyba.

LUDWIK Yes, my wife mentioned it.

ELWIRA And what do you think about it? You are so calm...

LUDWIK Well... if they really love each other.

ELWIRA But... it shouldn't be like that. To leave a middle- age woman. I sit alone in my big house... only my TV for company... oh...can I watch the end of "Manuela"?

LUDWIK Of course. I have bought a big screen TV.

ELWIRA (looks at her watch) But... there isn't much point. I must admit I am jealous. You've accepted that your wife has left you with no grudges?

LUDWIK In such situations the stoics used to say: "alea acta est". Acceptance is the best solution.

ELWIRA The stoics... yes.

LUDWIK Please don't think it wasn't difficult. When my wife told me about her decision, I was very severely bitten by mosquitoes. Some pampering would have been appreciated. But having thought about it I have come to a conclusion that "adictio non possare"... every cloud has a silver lining.

ELWIRA Meaning what?

LUDWIK Perhaps it's a chance for a new life... I was withering away... I'm in need of a completely different woman. Modern, free... a bit like you.

ELWIRA Just a minute...

LUDWIK Is it possible we could just... exchange? It would be exciting.

ELWIRA Me with you?

LUDWIK Yes.

ELWIRA But... I respect your passion for science but... you understand...my husband has made me accustomed to a certain standard of living which... as... you know.... Your flies...

LUDWIK Elwira, I can assure that one can live very well off flies and mosquitoes.

ELWIRA Please don't make me laugh, Ludwik.

LUDWIK Elwira, I understand your doubts. Please listen to me. During my scholarship in the States I had a specific cognitive shock, which created a landmark in my views. My American friends made me realize that the sense of scientific work doesn't lie in recognizing the real truth but that the truth has sense when it finds its practical application. So I have decided to change direction in my scientific research towards a strictly utilitarian one...

ELWIRA I understand... utilitarian. But what do I have in common with all of this?

LUDWIK Elwira, don't you understand that in this phase of scientific development I need a woman, such as you... who could provide me with the creative impulse to...

ELWIRA No, Ludwik. If you earned as much as my husband, then we could talk about those... em... impulses.

LUDWIK I'll do everything (kneels down) Please believe me!

ELWIRA Ludwik, what are you doing? Please get up.

LUDWIK Elwira!

ELWIRA No, Ludwik... maybe we'll talk about it another time...

Please tell me... I understand that you don't intend to talk your wife into leaving my husband?

LUDWIK No! Absolutely not.

ELWIRA I understand. I can see it all clearly now. But I shall not let it go like this, I will not... (leaves)

SCENE 23

Halina and Edward's apartment. Edward, very well dressed talks on his mobile. He's very upset.

EDWARD What... a police search? They took the bent ones? Oh fuck! I have to go. (disconnects)

Enters Halina. She is dressed up as if for a grand ball.

HALINA Eddie! Hurry up, we'll be late.

EDWARD Please, baby, opera again?

HALINA Not opera but ballet.

EDWARD But today... I have a few small problems at work and must have my mobile on, you know... hot line. And then you'll tell me to switch it off like last time.

HALINA Please don't even talk about that. I thought that I would die of shame. Mario Veruccio finishes his aria of Wandolfo and your mobile rings in your pocket... then you talk as if nothing happened.

EDWARD Yes, it shouldn't have happened... I couldn't hear anything because of that singer...

HALINA Switch it off now, you'll forget later on.

EDWARD But... I really have to have it on tonight. Could we just stay at home... you could make a nice supper... you're a wonderful cook...

HALINA Out of the question. I have spent 240 zloty and won't give the tickets up now.

EDWARD 240? Well... yes, you're right.

They leave.

VOICE (off) Mr Edward Kepka? Please come with us.

HALINA Gentlemen, excuse me but we're in a hurry. We're going to the Opera.

EDWARD (off, fast) Halina! Give it a break... I'll gladly go with these gentlemen.... But these handcuffs are entirely unnecessary.

SCENE 24

Old flat of the Kepkas. Elwira is watching TV. Agnieszka crosses the room.

ELWIRA Agnieszka, oh good, you're here. Look, there's an audition for a new TV rom com.

AGNIESZKA I don't want any poxy casting auditions! We agreed that I would come home on condition that you never mentioned them again!

ELWIRA Sorry, I know... but I thought... you may have changed your mind.

AGNIESZKA No!

ELWIRA What's wrong? You're so touchy...

AGNIESZKA Nothing. I've problems with an essay.

At this moment you hear the news on TV: Mr Edward K was arrested too. He is suspected to have been cooperating with a gang selling stolen cars".

AGNIESZKA Oh Jesus! Dad...

ELWIRA Yes, dad, dad. He has put on so much weight with this woman's...

AGNIESZKA Mother! Don't you understand? Dad has been arrested!

ELWIRA Yes, I heard about it. They should have done it years ago.

AGNIESZKA What are you saying?!

ELWIRA I'm saying that they should have stopped his criminal ways.

AGNIESZKA (after a moment) Mother, look at me. Did you grass him up?

ELWIRA Grass him up...? I only informed the correct authorities.

AGNIESZKA How could you... You weren't bothered about it before, and now, when he left you...

ELWIRA That bitch won't live off my money!

AGNIESZKA Yes... good. (goes up to the shelf with DVDs , takes one and leaves)

ELWIRA (gets up quickly) What do you want to do? Agnieszka! (runs after her) Give it back to me! Give it back!

They leave the stage.

SCENE 25

The Zytomirski's apartment. Ludwik behind the table with test tubes, ect.

He doesn't take any notice of Halina standing there.

HALINA Ludwik... I'm talking to you. Don't you really see any chance? I know, that I was wrong. The priest told me... (Ludwik doesn't take any notice) Please understand... it was madness...

LUDWIK (absentminded) Madness... why? You did very well.

HALINA Please understand that I was angry with you, that you left me all alone with all of the problems. That I had no support. When Adam didn't go back to school, my world collapsed and I reflected...

LUDWIK Yes, I know, I know... Listen, excuse me, but I'm very busy now. I've been working on a very promising research programme and...

HALINA Ok. I understand. (dramatic) I shall continue to bear my cross.

She trips and leaves.

SCENE 26

The Kepka's apartment. The TV is on.

ELWIRA (crying) How could you? To humiliate your own mother...

(Agnieszka is writing something on a piece of paper) What are you writing? (takes it from her, reads) "This is just the beginning. There will be a second and third part." Oh! (sits down on the sofa)

VOICE ON TV Please welcome. We are in a bookshop hosting the promotional launch of the book titled "Love in go-go club" by the young writer, Adam Zytomirski. All the critics were very impressed by the rich dramatic details and depth of subject. We ask the author: how did you acquire such knowledge and understanding...?

ADAM (TV screen) Well... I have a vivid imagination and I can say I've thoroughly researched the subject.

AGNIESZKA Oh, Adam...

VOICE ON TV The book is expected to be a bestseller. Already thirty thousand copies have been ordered...

ELWIRA Have you heard? Maybe it will be made into a TV drama.

And then you could... (Agnieszka leaves the flat) Agnieszka? Where are you going?

SCENE 27

Adam's flat. Adam is fiddling with a DVD tape. Agnieszka is standing next to him. The TV is on.

AGNIESZKA I didn't expect to see you alone here.

ADAM Why?

AGNIESZKA Because... now you're a well known writer... I'm sure you have many fans... (Adam waves his hand) Are you alone?

ADAM (waves his hand around) As you can see...

AGNIESZKA But... in this book the hero...

ADAM I had to think of someone to hook the female readers. When you write a "Mills and Boon" you can't do otherwise. Well... with what I think I can earn with this book will be enough to write more serious stuff...

AGNIESZKA Do you think I could...

ADAM No.

AGNIESZKA Why?

ADAM Why... you left me when I was at a lowest of low and now that I'm successful you come out of the blue?

AGNIESZKA I didn't leave you when you were at a low. I was with you. I left you when you were doing pretty well.

VOICE ON TV Now some sensational news from the world of science.

Mr Ludwik Zytomirski from the biology department of Warsaw

University has discovered an unusually effective product which can

protect people from mosquito bites. American and German pharmaceutical companies are already interested in this fantastic product called “Elwira”.

AGNIESZKA It’s been a good day today!

VOICE ON TV You will be very rich, Mr Zytomirski, won’t you?

LUDWIK (on TV screen, off) Well... the financial aspect is, of course, of no small importance

but certainly not the most important. The most important thing is that there is a product which will let people all over the world defend themselves from the misery which mosquitoes create. May I add that they create unusually complex information codes... It is obvious that the sense of science doesn’t lie in fruitless study of the world but in the real possibility of influencing it. A scientific discovery is only worthwhile if it can be practically applied for the good of mankind.

ADAM Well... well my old man has done well!

AGNIESZKA Adam...

ADAM What?

AGNIESZKA So you think we...can’t...?

ADAM No. But I have to thank you.

AGNIESZKA For what?

ADAM For the book. I wrote it for you... to prove to you... if it weren't for you, it would never have been written... But now... I don't want this...

AGNIESZKA I understand. I'll go... (moves to exit)

ADAM (stopping her) Agnieszka...

Agnieszka turns back. Adam smiles happy with his experiment.

ADAM Listen... writing is a risky business. One day you're winning and the next sinking... Do you promise that when I'm in the pits you'll support me?

AGNIESZKA I do. Of course.

ADAM (moves away) And do you promise you are not going to launch yourself at every girl I look at?

AGNIESZKA (hesitates) Well...

ADAM Yes or no?

AGNIESZKA (fast) Of course, of course... I promise.

ADAM Ok, don't go.

He comes up to him. He kisses her. They kiss passionately. Agnieszka moves away.

AGNIESZKA Adam... wait.

ADAM What's wrong?

AGNIESZKA You know... now that you're a well known writer, it may sound stupid but... will you write an essay for me? My Polish is my first lesson tomorrow.

SCENE 28

The Zytomirski's flat. Elwira and Ludwik are standing in the middle of the room. The TV is on.

ELWIRA Well... I just dropped in... I heard about your success and I thought that I really must congratulate you... (embraces him and kisses on both cheeks)

LUDWIK Thank you. Thank you. Well... it really is something. I have worked very hard on this but...

ELWIRA You worked yourself to the ground. I witnessed it.

LUDWIK Yes, yes...

ELWIRA But you've succeeded! (lower voice) Those pharmaceutical companies... it's not some media hype?

LUDWIK No, not really. The French and the Japanese have also called. I had to unplug my telephone.

ELWIRA Oh! Well... Is... is your proposition still on?

LUDWIK I have to consider that. You understand... that I succeeded without your direct help...

ELWIRA But indirectly...

LUDWIK Yes, indirectly, without a doubt, yes, Elwira...

ELWIRA Ludwik! I'm yours! (embraces him)

LUDWIK Oh! Elwira... I was waiting for this moment. (Elwira suddenly becomes stiff and turns towards the TV set) What happened?

ELWIRA Oh! Switch it off! I beg you! Eddie is in prison, Agnieszka left me and now this!

VOICE ON TV And now we are inviting you to the second part of our entertainment programme "Elwira's Pan", it's a very funny parody of cookery programmes. The first part was met with a very warm welcome and RTL and BBC2 want to buy the rights...

ELWIRA Just a second... I don't understand...

ELWIRA (from the screen) Welcome again to my actors sorry author's cookery programme...

She with one jump reaches TV and switches it off.

LUDWIK Elwira! Don't you understand? You're a star!

ELWIRA Yes? Yes. It's true! O Lord! I'm a star... I'm a star...! (stops)
You know, Ludwik... please don't misunderstand me but in this situation I have to rethink...

LUDWIK Elwira, a star falls down from time to time... (Elwira is silent) You need more solid grounding. And I... am not boasting... you know... Japanese, American...

ELWIRA Actually you're right. People get bored easily, I suppose, most stars get axed in the end. Ludwik... I'm so proud of you! (kisses him, and he kisses her, Elwira moves away) But you know what...

LUDWIK What?

ELWIRA Wouldn't you bail Eddie out? I feel a bit stupid because...

SCENE 29

Adam's and Agnieszka's flat. Everybody is there: Halina, pale after prison Eddie, dressed to impress Elwira and Ludwik. And of course the hosts. They sit at the table and finish eating hamburgers. Ludwik starts smoking a cigar. He looks as if he was upset by something.

ELWIRA (pushing her plate away) You know, honey... those hamburgers were not too bad, but you could have prepared something more refined.

AGNIESZKA But I am good at making them.

LUDWIK And you, Adam, why didn't you eat?

ADAM Me? I'm not hungry.

HALINA I don't like American food.

EDWARD Halina is very choosy. But she has the right as her culinary skills are excellent.

ELWIRA After prison grub everything is tasty... (her mobile rings, she gets it) Arthur? No, I can't talk now. Please call later. (switches it off)

AGNIESZKA (to her father) When is your trial?

EDWARD Soon after Christmas.

HALINA His lawyer says that his sentence will be suspended.

ELWIRA I don't think so.

HALINA Why? Edward is innocent. He was cheated by people he trusted!

ELWIRA I doubt he'll get away with it. (her mobile rings again)

Arthur! I told you... no, not yet. (mobile off)

HALINA Even if he's sentenced I won't leave him. I'll wait for him.

Perhaps we'll get even married in his cell?

LUDWIK Oh!

HALINA It will be romantic. Like after the uprising... (dreamily)

EDWARD Well... hopefully we'll not... But most importantly... I'll be able to spend Christmas at home. Halina promised to make thirteen dishes.

ELWIRA Yes? And I Lu will fly to the Maldives.

HALINA (indignant) For Christmas?

ELWIRA Yes. One has to stay warm. It's very cold in Poland.

EDWARD We like tradition. And all this is thanks to you, professor.

Thank you very much.

LUDWIK (smoking a cigar) Oh, let's not exaggerate. What is 250 thousand?

EDWARD Nevertheless... And how is your BMW? If something goes wrong, I can always have it repaired.

LUDWIK ... that car is really problem proof.

HALINA (to Halina) You know... Edward wants to open a garage. Start afresh. So if you give something he could start...

EDWARD Start some business.

LUDWIK Of course. There is something wrong with the wipers, they scratch a bit...

LUDWIK (happy) Wipers... Surely not screwed in properly.

ADAM Listen, you can talk business later. Now I want to announce that I'm getting married with Agnieszka.

HALINA What?

ELWIRA Really? Oh, that's wonderful.

EDWARD Fantastic! But pity you won't be a lawyer.

ADAM I'll manage somehow.

AGNIESZKA The publisher is doing a reprint. Fifty thousand sold now!

HALINA But you don't even have A-levels.

ADAM So what? I have been accepted as a reporter to "Gazeta Wyborcza". Why do I need stupid A-level. Besides we have to... Agnieszka is pregnant.

HALINA Yes? That changes everything.

ELWIRA Really? (whispers to Agnieszka) Well done, darling.

AGNIESZKA (reprimands her) Mother!

EDWARD So let's drink to that.

HALINA Edward!

EDWARD I only... it's an occasion.

Elwira's mobile again. She looks at the screen and switches it off.

LUDWIK Arthur again?

ELWIRA Arthur, and what? Oh. Lu... don't be so old fashioned.

AGNIESZKA Who is Arthur?

ELWIRA A cameraman from TV. Lu doesn't want to take him to

Maldives. No matter. Oh, darling, you will have a baby? That's

wonderful. (stops) Just a second... it means that I'll be a grandmother?

Oh, Jesus. (starts sobbing) I'll be a grandma!

SCENE 30

The same apartment. A while later. Only Adam and Agnieszka are there.

AGNIESZKA Tell your father to give up my mother. It has no future.

ADAM Why are you worried about them? It's most important that we are happy.

AGNIESZKA And if we aren't happy?

ADAM We shall live like them.

Both of them become quiet.

AGNIESZKA and ADAM No!!!!

They laugh and kiss. Slowly lights out.

The END.