

Fred Apke

Marta Klubowicz

Summer Villa



Translated by E.V Carter

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Characters:

Reizschneider – very famous actor. Around fifty years old.

Wolkowski- his stage partner. Over forty years old.

Mr Specht - owner of a nappy factory. Over fifty years old.

Mrs Specht - his wife. Over forty years old.

Margit – Mrs Specht's sister. A little younger.

Mrs Düsseldorf – Mrs Specht's friend. Over forty years old.

Boll – publicist. Over fifty.

Flapke - playwright. Around thirty years old.

Carmen – maid. Around twenty years old.

Place of action: The terrace and garden of a villa overlooking the sea.

Time of action: Next or last summer.

Character notes:**MARGIT**

The sarcastic sister of Mrs Specht. Relies on her sister. She hates the world full of rich people, but must live in this world. She hides away and writes. Reizschneider and Margit are attracted to each other, but are at war.

REIZSCHNEIDER

Well know actor. Handsome, alcoholic, also famous for his numerous romances. At the start of his career, a highly talented young man, he had a real passion for the arts, but soon sold out and began subscribing to shallow and empty roles. Wanting to desperately make a load of money, he engaged in wrong, naive financial investments. He bought a bar and was its best and most loyal customer. He lost all of his money. He was fired from a popular television soap because of his drinking.

WOLKOWSKI

Trusted friend of Reizschneider „mother“, but not life partner – Reizschneider is not gay. They spent many years together,

inseparable, on stage and on television. Lost in the world and lost in general. He looks after his friend and tries to pull him out of alcoholism.

MRS SPECHT

Mr Specht's next young wife. She wants to dedicate herself to the arts out of boredom. She hired a private tutor of literature, tries to align herself to the „higher echelons“ – overestimates her intellectual aptitude.

MR SPECHT

Relishes real business success. Comes from a poor family and likes to frequently remind everyone of this fact. He is astute, intelligent but is not well - educated. He is not suited to his companions. Tries to play golf, which really he hates but plays because it is fashionable to do so. He is bored to death – going on holiday fills him with disgust. Always looks for new hobbies.

BOLL

Know-it-all publicist, chatter – box. He always carries a book and then engages all those around him into absurd discussions. He thinks he is an intellectual giant. He is only friends with Flapke because he thinks he is – „ of his calibre“. He, same as Reizschneider, tries to be more than friends Mrs Specht. He offers her his best attributes but she

rejects him. He talks non-stop about the evil of capitalism but he himself milks it for what it's worth. He is also a theatre critic.

FLAPKE

Young, untalented but sensitive playwright.

Leads a snobby life of a creative. Suffers because of the evil on earth – he feels like a rebel – but does nothing apart from talk idly. He achieved successes among critics but actually with Boll. Does not agree to the casting of Reizschneider and Wolkowski in his play (too old and burnt out) However, following Boll's advice he „accepts it“. His texts are "chatty!" and fashionably kitsch.

Mrs DÜSSELDORF

Exulted friend of Mrs Specht. Gossips about everyone. Widow looking for a new partner. Drones on to everyone around her about her dead husband and how amazing he was. Desperately wanting love. Watches her friend's flirtations with Reizschneider from the sidelines and always wants to be abreast of everything. She chats up Boll, who, at first, finds it annoying. However, when he is rejected by Mrs Specht, he jumps into bed with her.

CARMEN

Maid. Young, pretty, intelligent, honest.

Upstage is the back wall of the Spechts' summer villa, facing the sea. To the left and right are paths, which lead to a swimming pool and a garage. The back of the house is made of glass. The interior can be seen through sliding doors. There is a balcony leading to the guest room on the first floor. On the terrace, which goes as far as the house is wide, are sun loungers, parasols and portable tables. Downstage, on the left, is a table where the holidaymakers eat cake and drink cool drinks. The left side of the terrace ends with a kitsch, marble gate, which is a poor imitation of 'antique style'. A small, shabby garden, which has a few bushes, leads down to the second terrace in which a Hollywood -style swing is seen (only furniture.) The second terrace ends with a small wall, which separates a garden from the beach. There are three steps leading down to the sea.

ACT 1

Margit stands on the upper terrace with small camera in hand filming the sea. Mrs Specht is relaxing on a lounge and trying to read. Next to her is a mound of books. Margit points camera at Mrs Specht.

MRS SPECHT: Stop it. I don't have any makeup on.

MARGIT: That makes it all the more interesting.

Silence

MRS SPECHT: Good that you're here, we'll try to get on.

MARGIT: I'm sure. One gets mellows in their old age.

MRS SPECHT: I don't feel old yet.

MARGIT: But I do, and I'm younger than you.

MRS SPECHT: That's your problem.

Specht enters the garden.

MARGIT: Good morning, dear Gerhard.

SPECHT: Morning.

MARGIT enters the house.

MRS SPECHT: What's going on? Are you feeling all right?

SPECHT: *Sotto.* Great. Quite fabulous...

MRS SPECHT: Has the race finished yet?

SPECHT: Your friend joined me.

MRS SPECHT: She's only trying to be nice to you.

SPECHT: There are many that are nice to me.

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard, can I tell you something?

SPECHT: Please do.

MRS SPECHT: You don't look good in jeans.

SPECHT: I'm on holiday.

MRS SPECHT: And besides – we have guests.

SPECHT: I'm on holiday!

MRS SPECHT: Darling – please. Relax.

SPECHT: Yes. Because I'm on holiday!

Silence

MRS SPECHT: Maybe you want to go on a drive in your new car?

Hmmm?

SPECHT: The GPS doesn't work. I don't feel like driving a broken car. It spoils my mood.

MRS SPECHT: This way or that, you're in a bad mood.

SPECHT: *Pointedly.* Oh yes! You bet!

There are too many people here. All day just: Good morning, Good evening, Bon Appetit... would you care to? Would you like? Would you perhaps? And more are coming...great perspectives...it really sets me up for a good mood.

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard, please – get a grip. This project is really important to me.

SPECHT: And it's expensive for me.

MRS SPECHT: I haven't felt so good in a long time.

SPECHT: If it's important to you...if you're going to feel better – or even, feel good...

MRS SPECHT: Lately I've actually been feeling really good.

SPECHT: That means that the money is well invested. What are you reading there?

MRS SPECHT: Dostoyevsky.

SPECHT: And? Amusing?

MRS SPECHT: Depressing.

SPECHT: So why are you reading that piffle.

MRS SPECHT: Piffle...?

SPECHT: I thought that you're feeling good.

MRS SPECHT: It's world literature.

SPECHT: What's it to me that's it's world literature if it's going to make me feel worse afterwards?

MRS SPECHT: In any case I'm doing something for myself – whereas you potter around.

SPECHT: I'm on holiday.

Silence

MRS SPECHT: So go and play some golf, won't you?

SPECHT: Oh no... types like me hang around over there.

MRS SPECHT: Types like me hang around ...types hang around...

SPECHT: You don't like how I talk? Unfortunately, I didn't have time for education.

MRS SPECHT: Yes, your father was a poor carpenter who had a paralysed hand and could hardly support his family.

SPECHT: A-

MRS SPECHT: You built your fortune on your parents' wedding rings.

SPECHT: That's how it was. Here you are sitting in your new dress, because of me selling my parents' wedding rings and if I hadn't have sold them, you'd be sitting in your new dress by the sea – with someone else.

Mrs Specht slams the book shut.

MRS SPECHT: Are you serious?!

SPECHT: *Sotto*. No. Of course not. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you.

MRS SPECHT: You need to be cautious when using that phrase.

SPECHT: Sometimes it's not enough to repeat it.

Mrs Duesseldorff exits the house. Actually, I'd like to be alone.

MRS SPECHT: I'm supposed to go out now, right?

SPECHT: Give over. I'll do it for you – Ah, Lydia, I could murder a steak for dinner ...

MRS SPECHT: There will be steaks, darling.

SPECHT: At least something to be happy about.

MRS SPECHT: And do something. Busy yourself with something, will you?

SPECHT: O.K. I will, I will.

Trundles off to the left behind the house

DUESSELDORF: What's wrong with him?

SPECHT: Heart problems.

DUESSELDORF: Did you have some kind of breakthrough conversation?

SPECHT: He misses the firm.

DUESSELDORF: My husband died in the firm. At three in the morning. What a beautiful day. And me in the midst of its beauty. Thank you, for letting me be here.

MRS SPECHT: You're part of the family.

MRS Duesseldorff waves her hand.

DUESSELDORF: Look – Mr Boll. Toodleloo, over here!

MRS SPECHT: You're behaving like a schoolgirl.

DUESSELDORF: You are as old as you feel. Have you seen his hands? So narrow, so slim...

MRS SPECHT: Too small. In relation to his head.

Goes up to the table and stuffs cake into her mouth – like a hamster storing its food in its cheeks. Waves her hand again.

DUESSELDORF: *Shame...Unfortunately it's your territory.*

MRS SPECHT: I love my husband.

DUESSELDORF: Sorry. I forgot.

MRS Duesseldorff wants to shove another piece of cake into her mouth...

MRS SPECHT: How much do you weigh today?

DUESSELDORF: Eighty-five.

MRS SPECHT: Yesterday it was still eighty-four.

Dusseldorff puts back the cake.

DUESSELDORF: Ah, it's hard to be alone. When are you expecting Mr Reizschneider?

MRS SPECHT: Around midday.

DUESSELDORF: And you're not at all nervous?

MRS SPECHT: You're annoying me

At the bottom, under the wall, Boll appears and thinks the next sentence is aimed at him.

DUESSELDORF: Are you interested in him?

MRS SPECHT: That man is a great artist.

DUESSELDORF: In all areas, apparently.

BOLL: Good morning ladies! The only thing more beautiful than this morning is...

MRS SPECHT: Our mesmerising beauty, yes, yes...

MRS Specht yawns.

BOLL: Yes...I wanted to say something quite similar...

Flicks back his ponytail and fixes it again.

DUESSELDORF: The project going forward?

BOLL: I've been pacing up and down the beach with Flapke since eight in the morning discussing the ending of his play – and it has come to nothing...That boy is frothing and boiling over...but it's unstructured. Still.

DUESSELDORF: At least you he has you, thankfully.

BOLL: I hope to calm those rapids.

DUESSELDORF: Why didn't you write the play yourself?

BOLL: Dear Mrs Duesseldorff, I – one could say – am above literature. I'm not allowed to submerge myself in that ocean, or else I'd lose perspective...and I won't know how to separate the wheat from the chaff.

MRS SPECHT: In the ocean? The wheat from the chaff – in the ocean?

Boll has stopped by the table with the cakes – picks up a fork.

DUESSELDORF: You are clearly too clever to write it yourself.

MRS SPECHT: But he writes.

DUESSELDORF: Oh yes? Interesting? What about?

BOLL: In my book I'm developing thought on what, which in my opinion, is lacking in our lives and what can heal us – if we develop it within ourselves again.

DUESSELDORF: Interesting. What's that?

BOLL: Vaginal might, which, unhindered, grows stronger thanks to spirituality.

DUESSELDORF: Sounds interesting. And what is it, exactly?

MRS SPECHT: Sex. If you can remember what that is.

BOLL: *Persuasively to Mrs Specht.* Phallic energy. Christianity, with a whip in its hand, condemned it to the underworld. This beautiful creature sits hunched, cowering and bearing its teeth, dreaming of freedom.

Mrs Specht yawns again, Boll turns. We've been maimed, dear lady!

DUESSELDORF: Interesting.

BOLL: Because it is. It is. *Looks at the forks again.*

Beautiful...stunning....

DUESSELDORF: Yes, we repress each other...

BOLL: Art deco...

DUESSELDORF: We've been stifled. We hide. Why do we wear clothes? Why don't we walk around naked?

MRS SPECHT: Lotte?

DUESSELDORF: What I mean – well, it's warm? My husband and I...that is...my former husband...my deceased husband...we went around India for six weeks... and once, in this small village...there was only this communal place where you could stay the night...There

wasn't even bed sheets...Everyone just slept on mats...practically naked...and we did too. And the next day I thought to myself...see, you can do that too...and I sort of felt free ...it was a real experience...which...which, I hold inside me to his day.

BOLL: Real gold, right?

DUESSELDORF: Two thousand euros. Each.

MRS SPECHT: Lotte...

BOLL: I love beautiful objects.

Mrs Specht yawns again. Boll puts the fork down in its place, fixes his ponytail, takes the book from her hands. Dostoyevsky? And it's making you yawn? Have you finished Houellbecq?

MRS SPECHT: Yes. Last night.

BOLL: And?

MRS SPECHT: I'm waiting for it to start working.

Gets up and heads towards the house. Well, I have to discuss what we'll have for lunch with the maid.

BOLL: Will you be serving something vegetarian?

MRS SPECHT: Not really.

BOLL: And what can we look forward to?

MRS SPECHT: Steak.

BOLL: A faux - pas!

MRS SPECHT: My husband's wish...

DUESSELDORF: Something vegetarian for me too, please!

BOLL: Well done! Welcome to civilisation!

MRS SPECHT: Your husband left you a meat emporium in his will and you want to be vegetarian?

BOLL: Oh?

DUESSELDORF: I want to sell up, anyway. You've awoken me and opened my eyes, Mr Boll.

BOLL: Your sensuality will benefit most out of it.

You'll see for yourself.

DUESSELDORF: I'm already getting excited.

BOLL: And you lose weight.

MRS SPECHT: She's already getting excited.

BOLL: I wasn't referring to you. I was just saying in general. I – I'm sorry.

DUESSELDORF: It's all right. I'm going to change.

Mrs DUESSELDORF enters the house.

MRS SPECHT: Be a little more tactful, Rudiger. She likes you.

BOLL: Oh really? I can't do anything about that. *She wants to leave.*
Stay. Can't we be together one on one? Are you avoiding me? *Stands behind her, places his hands on her shoulders.* Are you doing it on purpose? Tell me? Are you tormenting me?
To the left Specht slumps into a lounge, he nervously looks at a manual.

MRS SPECHT: Get your hands off.

BOLL: Only if you promise that then we'll go your favourite place. *She pushes off his hands.* What's up with him?

MRS SPECHT: He feels alienated.

BOLL: I'd feel the same if I were in his shoes. *His hands go back on her shoulders.*

MRS SPECHT: Get off! Our project is getting on his nerves. I'm worried he'll pull out.

BOLL: In that case we need to encourage him. We'll meet later on the beach. Before sunset. But no backing out.

MRS Specht enters the house. Boll stands in front of the lounge.

BOLL: Isn't it a beautiful day?

SPECHT: You don't know what you're talking about, sir.

BOLL: Could I join you?

SPECHT: Only if you have to.

BOLL: I need your advice. Mr Flapke is a bit retentive.

SPECHT: What?

BOLL: Indignant.

SPECHT: Excuse me?

BOLL: Indolent.

SPECHT: Yes?

BOLL: Inflexible. In a nutshell...

SPECHT: Really, go on?

BOLL: A bit wayward.

SPECHT: Thank God.

BOLL: Why?

SPECHT: Now I've got you.

BOLL: Sorry.

SPECHT: What are you saying sorry to me for? Do you have me for a fool?

BOLL: Mr Specht, I implore you.

SPECHT: But I'm an idiot. There's absolutely no point in talking to me.

BOLL: I was relying on your experience. I'm supposed to work on the ending of Mr Flapke's play today. His imagination is rather absurd....

Do you think that it's normal that a young person tries to commit suicide by shoving socks down their throat?

SPECHT: If they're clean, it's all right.

Flapke appears, sees Specht and backs away.

I have to - I have to attend to something urgently.

Wants to leave.

BOLL: Do you not like Mr Flapke?

SPECHT: I like my wife. My wife likes you, you like Mr Flapke. At the end of the chain, I lug the young man behind me. What to do?

BOLL: You should get involved! You should try give something from yourself, hmm?

Flapke appears again..

SPECHT: *To Flapke.* Why don't you just turn off the light!

FLAPKE: Excuse me?

SPECHT: Just turn off the light somewhere in your play. That would be a good ending to your script.

FLAPKE: It's not a script- it's a play. *Specht exits.* Ignoramus.

BOLL: Watch it.

FLAPKE: What an awful man. Dried up. No spark.

BOLL: But he's loaded. Without that dried up man your play won't be staged. In any case, not in the foreseeable future.

FLAPKE: Because it's bad?

BOLL: Dear Lord - are you starting again? The play is just new-fangled. A bit provocative. A bit extreme - for the masses. You need to

carefully drip feed them morsels of spirituality – like fish in an aquarium.

FLAPKE: Aquarium! Exactly! Eyes wide open – the last words under water...bubbles float up...

BOLL: Could you let me in on it, please?

FLAPKE: Henry drowns in an aquarium. With a weight around his neck!

BOLL: But please, does he even have to die?

FLAPKE: He has to! That's why I wrote the play. This play is a dance before death...begging for delay.

BOLL: But with a head in an aquarium... That's how a mafia boss dies – not an intellectual.

FLAPKE: I want big, sharp metaphors. Henry directs himself. And his choice of death is his last message. Don't you get it?

BOLL: Only that it can't be funny.

FLAPKE: Oh right, yeah...so I'm pathetic. Right? Right?

BOLL: No.

FLAPKE: But maybe just a....

BOLL: No.

FLAPKE: Yes!

BOLL: No. You have to believe in yourself. Then others will believe in you too. *Emphasising every word.* You. Are. Not. Pathetic! Right, so, head up high and onwards and upwards.

MARGIT enters from the direction of the beach dressed in a bathrobe.

MARGIT: Good morning, Mr Boll. Oh, and here is our genius. I've read your play. I couldn't sleep afterwards.

BOLL: Yes, shocking stuff.

MARGIT: I'm worried about Mr Flapke.

BOLL: You can rest assured - Mr Flapke wrote the play as not to do it.

MARGIT: What do you mean?

BOLL: To not kill himself.

MARGIT: Yes, of course. He'll kill himself as soon as the first review comes out. That's what I predict.

MARGIT disappears into the house. Flapke slumps into the chair.

BOLL: Please...don't even listen to it.

FLAPKE: But maybe she's right? Maybe I'm really just an idiot? Just a gland that spouts text.

BOLL: Are you starting again?!

FLAPKE: Others sweat - and I write.

BOLL: You're good!

FLAPKE: Why am I good? Give me one reason...?!

BOLL: Because I think so. Get me? Dear Lord, why are you shaking like that?

FLAPKE: I haven't slept for two nights now. As soon as I lie down everything starts spinning like on a carousel...all those images...those tiring images.

BOLL: Calm down. It's just your talent that's tormenting you. I'm going to try to lead you down the right path. Please trust me.

FLAPKE: Thank you. I think we've got to know each other a little better.

MARGIT exits the house with a camera, filming. Behind her is Mrs Specht...

MRS SPECHT: Ah – the creatives.

FLAPKE: I think that you didn't quite get my play.

BOLL: Mr Flapke, it won't do anything.

MARGIT: You get the impression that the main character vomits at every second comma.

FLAPKE: Yes! Dammit! I want clout! Intestines of life! Not some hollow shells of human beings!

BOLL: Yes, Mr Flapke looks deep into the depths of our souls.

MRS SPECHT: Exactly. Into what you cannot see.

MARGIT: Well, he should be a urologist then. Maybe that's the answer.

MRS SPECHT: Margit!?

Flapke marches away.

BOLL: Mr Flapke is a young, sensitive man who can easily be made feel dejected. His self – belief is somewhat under developed.

MARGIT: In some cases that has it's reasons. I'm just trying to prevent catastrophe.

BOLL: You are a catastrophe unto yourself first and foremost. You should see to that first...

Mrs Specht – I'll be on the beach.

Exits.

Specht, beaming, enters from the garden.

MRS SPECHT: *to Margit.* Leave my guests alone.

SPECHT: It worked!

MRS SPECHT: *To Margit.* If not, you can leave.

SPECHT: The G.P.S works!

MRS SPECHT: Wonderful, darling. .

SPECHT: Despite the instruction manual.

MRS SPECHT: I am proud of you.

SPECHT: You just have to put your mind to it.

MRS SPECHT: Exactly. Go on a little drive then, hmmm?

SPECHT: Where to?

MRS SPECHT: Where? Well... there's this new prehistoric cemetery way over there. With old, stone tombs ... There's even a headstone with your name on it.

SPECHT: You bought me a plot at a cemetery?

MRS SPECHT: No. You donated money for its rebuilding.

SPECHT: And I don't even know anything about it? How much?

MRS SPECHT: Enough to not feel embarrassed.

SPECHT: Well then it's probably so much to make me annoyed.

MRS SPECHT: Go on then. You'll get some air in that head of yours, hmmm?

SPECHT: The cemetery? I don't know... I've got a strange feeling... Like something were to happen to me today...?

MRS SPECHT: My poor, little shnukums has a bit too much time for silly thoughts on his hands.

Mrs Dusseldorf dressed up to the nines, donning a huge hat, jogs out of the house. Specht looks at her, horrified.

DUESSELDORF: Mr Reizschneider is on television.

SPECHT: O.K. I'm off.

MRS SPECHT: Have a lovely day, won't you!

DUESSELDORF: Gerard, are you going to play golf

SPECHT: No. I'm going to have a lovely day. With my sat nav.

Exits to the left.

DUESSELDORF: Reizschneider is on television

MARGIT: Did he wave to you? Does he seriously want to act in that Flapke's play?

MRS SPECHT: Lead role.

MARGIT: I don't reckon he has read the play.

MRS SPECHT: Because?

MARGIT: Because he's coming...

MRS SPECHT: Apart from that, he'll get an advertising contract.

MARGIT: Oh yes - courtesy of your nut job of a husband?

MRS SPECHT: I want you to never call my husband a nut job ever again. Please be aware that you're only here thanks to our hospitality.

DUESSELDORF: Exactly.

MARGIT: That goes for you too.

MRS SPECHT: I am his wife.

MARGIT: Because you love him?

MRS SPECHT: Silly question.

MARGIT: Yes, actually it is a silly question.

MRS SPECHT: Shame. You haven't changed at all.

MARGIT: Nor you. You always willingly showed the boys your panties in exchange for chewing gum.

DUESSELDORF: Lydia...? You're insolent!

MRS SPECHT: Leave it out. She always stood on the sidelines.

DUESSELDORF: You must have suffered because of that, hmmm?

MARGIT: Well we both suffered the same fate. We both stood at the sideline. A slice of cake?

MRS Duesseldorff blurts out loudly.

MRS SPECHT: I'm embarrassed for you!

MARGIT: How times change. I once had to be embarrassed for you.

Margit goes to the house, Mrs Specht calls after her.

MRS SPECHT: Either you put away your poison tongue or get out!

Carmen exits with a jug of ice water.

MRS SPECHT: Take care of the pool.

CARMEN: Yes, mam, right after lunch.

MRS SPECHT: No, now!

CARMEN: Thank you mam.

MRS SPECHT: Why are you thanking me?

CARMEN: Because you'll take over the cooking.

MRS SPECHT: I'm supposed to cook for you or what?

CARMEN: In that case, I'll leave out the pool?

Carmen exits.

MRS SPECHT: Wait!

Furious, Mrs Specht goes after her. The screeching of a car's breaks is heard. Reizschneider and Wolkowski enter the garden. They are both exhausted – Reizschneider, drunk, props himself against the wall.

WOLKOWSKI: Dear God, if he hadn't have swerved out the way there would have been one less good actor.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I would have pulled through, somehow.

WOLKOWSKI: That was fleeing from the scene of an accident.

REIZSCHNEIDER: But he fled! Straight into the field.

WOLKOWSKI: You could go to prison for that.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wolli - please.

WOLKOWSKI: I am not your Wolli!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Mr Wolkowski, please don't make your life any more complicated.

WOLKOWSKI: Without you, life would be quite straightforward. – We shouldn't have stopped.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I was hungry...

WOLKOWSKI: You needed a drink. And I let myself go along with it. I let myself go along with it, again. Next time we'll go by train – without a restaurant wagon. I hope we've got the right place?

Reizschneider slumps onto the lounge.

REIZSCHNEIDER: We've got the right place... Ahhhh...!

WOLKOWSKI: And I still don't know what this is all about! What is this play?

REIZSCHNEIDER: And excellent play.

WOLKOWSKI: What's so excellent about it?

REIZSCHNEIDER: There are only twenty pages. And we'll make a wad of cash.

WOLKOWSKI: What's it about?

REIZSCHNEIDER: A load of money, Wolli!

WOLKOWSKI: What sort of roles?

REIZSCHNEIDER: What is this - the Spanish inquisition? It's about opening, closing and disappearing...

WOLKOWSKI: What are you talking about?

REIZSCHNEIDER: First, we'll open our mouths – then we'll close them – then we'll open up our hands – and then we'll close them – and then we'll disappear. And what the hell do you need to know more about what happens in the play?

WOLKOWSKI: Because as an artist – it interests me... because I am an artist! What success we used to have – both of us. The audience was like a woman who would never have enough...And now? I know your scripts better than my own...what an embarrassment...! I don't know myself why I take care of you? And, I had good proposals at that. Fantastic proposals. Without you. Categorically: without you! Lord...who could I have been today, if I hadn't had met you? And you still say nothing. Not even the slightest words of gratitude. But now I've had enough! I've decided – you hear? I'm going to be an egoist. Those sorts of people have it better off. From now on, I'm not going to be your guide dog. I've made the decision for us both! Do you hear? Hey, Reizsnieder!? *Reizsnieder is asleep*. Typical. As soon as it stops being fun – you're out the door.

Mrs Duesseldorff appears in the terrace doors...

DUESSELDORF: Good morning.

WOLKOWSKI: Good morning.

DUESSELDORF: Could I ask – who are you?

WOLKOWSKI: Wolkowski.

DUESSELDORF: And what are you doing here?

WOLKOWSKI: I'm expected...

DUESSELDORF: I don't know anything about it.

WOLKOWSKI: I'm accompanying Mr Reizneider.

DUESSELDORF: Oh yes...? Oh yes! Lydia!? – Lydia!?

to Wolkowski. Reizneider!

WOLKOWSKI: It's nice here.

DUESSELDORF: One of the most beautiful and tranquil spots on the coast.

Mrs Specht appears, calls behind her.

MRS SPECHT: You're fired!

DUESSELDORF: Here we're only amongst our own kind.

MRS SPECHT: Insolent creature!

DUESSELDORF: Lydia?

MRS SPECHT: Go back to your Hamburg slums.

DUESSELDORF: Lydia!?

MRS SPECHT: What's going on?

DUESSELDORF: Lydia, Mr Reizschneider has arrived.

MRS SPECHT: Oh, but that's not him.

DUESSELDORF: That's Mr...Mr?

WOLKOWSKI: Wolkowski.

MRS SPECHT: Pleased to meet you.

WOLKOWSKI: Actor.

MRS SPECHT: So you're an actor too?

WOLKOWSKI: Of twenty-six years.

MRS SPECHT: Oh yes, Mr Reizsneider did mentioned something about you – you didn't, per chance, act in that soap? The one he plays a doctor in.

WOLKOWSKI: I've been acting as his right hand man for fifteen years.

MRS SPECHT: Oh yes, of course...the one with a speech impediment.

WOLKOWSKI: No. That's his counterpart, Dr Zmijewski. Any way, the producers at the TV station want me to have my own show. People write in...you know, that kind of thing.

MRS SPECHT: *Waves her hand.* Let's go. Mr Reizschneider has arrived!

WOLKOWSKI: TV producers have to react to it.

MRS SPECHT: But where is he?

WOLKOWSKI: I'll probably play a lawyer, who... *Boll and Flapke enter from the beach.*

MRS SPECHT: Mr Reizschneider has arrived!

WOLKOWSKI: A lawyer who fights for human rights and...

MRS SPECHT: Gentlemen, may I - this is Mr...? Mr...?

WOLKOWSKI: Wolkowski! Actor!

MRS SPECHT: Mr Witkowski –

WOLKOWSKI: Wolkowski...

MRS SPECHT: Mr Wolkowski will play the part of Meltür.

FLAPKE: What? Hold up, hold up – please forgive me ...but. No. That's impossible! Meltur is young, slim, and beautiful – a sight to behold radiating inner light! *Silence. Everybody stares at the small, round, Wolkowski.*

MRS SPECHT: *To Wolkowski.* You'll manage, won't you? Mr Reizschneider opted for Mr Wolkowski.

FLAPKE: I know you. You play that doctor. The one with the speech impediment? I am in full of admiration. Amazing.

WOLKOWSKI: Doctor Zmijewski?

FLAPKE: Yes, exactly, Dr. Zmijewski.

WOLKOWSKI: I don't play him.

MRS SPECHT: He's here of course! Asleep like a baby...Well...

Flapke and Mrs Specht stand over the sleeping Reizschneider.

WOLKOWSKI: He's a bit tired from the journey. Just yesterday, he had a premiere in Munich. And then straight into the car.

MRS SPECHT: Workaholic.

WOLKOWSKI: That too.

Enter MARGIT.

MRS SPECHT: Margit, Mr Reizneider has arrived.

MRS SPECHT: This is Mr...? I'm sorry...

WOLKOWSKI: Wolkowski!

DUESSELDORF: Mr Wolkowski is also an actor.

MRS SPECHT: Mr Wolkowski has been Mr Reizneider's antagonist of twenty-six years.

WOLKOWSKI: *Raised voice.* Assistant! And not of twenty-six years! Of fifteen! Fifteen years is still a bloody long time, but it's not the same as twenty-six! I had a beautiful, fulfilled life before I met Mr Reizneider – I'd just like to mention at this precise moment!

MRS SPECHT: Not so loud! You'll go and wake him.

Specht, stumbling, goes through the garden holding his head.

SPECHT: Where's that pig?

MRS SPECHT: Darling, my God. What happened?

SPECHT: Ohhh... across the ditch...onto the field.

MRS SPECHT: Did the navigation break again?

SPECHT: No!

MRS SPECHT: So why do you do such things?

SPECHT: If I hadn't had done that, I'd not be here! I looked death in the eyes...That maniac headed straight for me!

MRS SPECHT: My God- you're bleeding?!

SPECHT: See! See - I knew I'd bleed today! And you didn't want to listen to me!

MRS SPECHT: We have to call the police! Carmen!

WOLKOWSKI: Please wait a minute-

MRS SPECHT: No, that criminal must be caught at once. Maybe he's drunk? Imagine if something really had happened!

SPECHT: It did happen! And the fucker is here! In my house! MRS

SPECHT: No...

SPECHT: Yes!

MRS SPECHT: So you think...?

SPECHT: I don't think...I know! His car is parked in front of our house.

Goes up to Wolkowski threateningly.... You?

WOLKOWSKI: Yes... I...

SPECHT: Was it you driving?

WOLKOWSKI: No. I don't drink. That is - I don't drive. I don't have a driving license.

SPECHT: In that case he was driving - answer me!?

WOLKOWSKI: If I remember correctly - yes.

Specht wakes Reizschneider by shaking him.

SPECHT: Hey, wake up call!

MRS SPECHT: Gerard -

SPECHT: I need to talk to you. Right now!

REIZSCHNEIDER: I don't do interviews.

SPECHT: Fucking road hog! Now you want to talk to me!

Specht goes ballistic, slams down the armrest trapping Reizschneider in the lounge.

MRS SPECHT: You'll kill him! You'll kill him!

SPECHT: He wanted to kill me too! Eye for an eye!

BOLL: Mr Specht?!

SPECHT: Tooth for a tooth!

BOLL: Call damn, man!

Mrs Specht pulls her husband away. Boll straightens out the lounge, Reizschneider gets up.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I don't feel well...is there a possibility...to...I have to...where is the set director?

Reizschneider helplessly stumbles towards the pool.

FLAPKE: One thing's for sure – I not going to work with him. He'll kill my play!

MRS SPECHT: Oh, no! He has fallen into the pool.

Mrs Specht runs after Reizschneider. Wolkowski frantically whips off his clothes.

MARGIT: Please don't trouble yourself.

BOLL: Cynic!

MARGIT: There's no water in the pool.

II ACT

Mrs DUESSELDORF has adopted a pose on the lounge, which she considers alluring. WOLKOWSKI, wearing awful shorts and yellow gumboots, reluctantly stands next to her. He is waving a small, red, plastic bucket around.

DUESSELDORF: So we were all lying on these mats – naked...and then we sort of swapped ...just swapped. And that was a key experience. The power of the vagina, do you understand?

WOLKOWSKI: Not really.

DUESSELDORF: Phallic energy!

WOLKOWSKI: That I understand...

Wolkowski wants to leave.

DUESSELDORF: What do you intend to do now?

WOLKOWSKI: Collect some shells....

DUESSELDORF: *Swans up to him.* Can I accompany you?

WOLKOWSKI: I'm gay.

DUESSELDORF: Oh... well, in that case...

WOLKOWSKI: See you.

Specht rushes out of the house with a bandage on this head, behind him is Carmen.

SPECHT: Why did I employ you again?

CARMEN: Your wife's command...

Mrs Specht exits carrying a napkin.

SPECHT: Do you want to kill me? Tofu goulash and algae salad!

MRS SPECHT: Mr Boll can't stand meat.

SPECHT: So let him devour the whole garden! I was so looking forward to steak.

MRS SPECHT: Please? You're compromising us.

SPECHT: Those steaks meant so much to me.

MRS SPECHT: I love you!

SPECHT: And where are my steaks?

MRS SPECHT: *to Carmen.* Well, what are you standing there for?! I have fired you.

SPECHT: Yes, my steaks are not important.

Carmen enters the house.

MRS SPECHT: Please don't make a scene. Please! Sit down at the table with us again.

SPECHT: So that brat can insult me again?

MRS SPECHT: Calm down. You've got nothing to do – that's why you are so touchy!

SPECHT: Yes, yes! I have to occupy myself with something. I have do something urgently. Yes!

Reaches for a golf club and starts to ridiculously wave it in the air. Boll exits the house, behind him is Flapke and Mrs Duesseldorff and a little later, Margit. Boll gives a sign to Mrs Specht that he'll deal with it.

BOLL: Mr Specht?

SPECHT: No!

BOLL: You misunderstood Mr Flapke!

FLAPKE: I understood him perfectly. I stand by what I said!

MRS SPECHT: *pleasantly*. Who cares for a little more champagne?

BOLL: I would like to explain to you...

SPECHT: I don't have time!

BOLL: He meant–

SPECHT: Out of my way. Can't you see that I'm busy?

BOLL: He meant that, -

SPECHT: Get out of here!

FLAPKE: I confirm that!

MRS SPECHT: Shouts to the house. Carmen, champagne!

BOLL: Mr Flapke was meaning to say; that one must not rely on money in order to do something worthwhile!

SPECHT: Sorry?! Can't you see that I'm actually doing something deeply worthwhile? If you don't get out of my way immediately, then...

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard!?

BOLL: I love you!

SPECHT: What?

BOLL: I love you. I'm just sort of telling you. You don't have to do anything. Money is actually a materialistic libido. Money gives meaning and attracts attention. Behind the efforts of making money lies the yearning for love, support and acceptance
– you just want to be loved.

SPECHT: And you love me?

BOLL: Yes. Just yes. For free. And not for your money. Love for money never really works out.

SPECHT: That I agree with. I've been married four times.

DUESSELDORF: Gerhard?!

MRS SPECHT: *Changes the topic.* And the champagne?

DUESSELDORF: *To Specht.* We'll talk about this some more.
Specht wants to go into the house.

FLAPKE: I confirm what I said. He lacks conscience ... in the consumptive cogs of capitalism!

BOLL: Please shut up, already?

Specht stops, turns around.

SPECHT: I have a question: who pays you?

MARGIT: Gerhard – don't blackmail him! For an artist - independence is of utmost importance.

FLAPKE: That's true.

MARGIT: For that reason, you shouldn't keep Mr Flapke hanging in a situation, which corrupts him. Don't finance his play.

SPECHT: You're right. I just can't do that to him.

FLAPKE: Money must transform itself in the soul – that's the only sense which money makes.

MARGIT: One more reason not to invest in that play.

FLAPKE: Mrs...Mrs-

MARGIT: You can't find the right phrase? Can I give you a hint?

FLAPKE: Yes, you rightly know who you are!

MARGIT: The bottom line is that we all know who we are.

Flapke meanders over towards the beach. Boll puffs his chest in front of Margit.

BOLL: Do you understand that creative work is only possible in an atmosphere of mutual appreciation.

MARGIT: Are you feeling tense, Mr literary giant?

MRS SPECHT: Margit! I've asked you!

BOLL: What is she actually doing here?

MRS SPECHT: Good question. Better if you go back to your room in the attic.

MARGIT: Shame. I would have loved to stay.

MRS SPECHT: Apologise in that case.

MARGIT: I'm sorry Mr literary giant- it was too harsh a phrase. I should have said idiot at the start – or even worse... pompous bombast. It's unforgivable! I'll punish myself – by my absence!

Leaves. Specht laughs.

MRS SPECHT: What's so funny?

SPECHT: Nothing. Nothing's funny.

Carmen enters with a suitcase.

SPECHT: Carmen, tonight we'll serve steaks!

CARMEN: But -

SPECHT: No steak, no job.

CARMEN: I've already been fired.

SPECHT: You're hired again!

MRS SPECHT: She's fired.

SPECHT: No!

MRS SPECHT: Yes!

SPECHT: No!

MRS SPECHT: I run this house!

SPECHT: Fine – if there won't be steak – you'll be fired then.

Marches to the house

CARMEN: What now?

SPECHT: You're hired again.

Carmen hauls her suitcase up the stairs. Mrs Specht flops onto the Hollywood style swing.

BOLL: You should really think about removing your sister from here.

DUESSELDORF: Exactly. You should.

BOLL: Your husband is completely disorientated.

DUESSELDORF: I'll fix it. I'll tell him what to do. Your husband listens to me

MRS SPECHT: Lotte – please, no!

DUESSELDORF: Everyone has their own task to do here. And this is mine. Trust me.

MRS Duesseldorff enters the house.

BOLL: She's charming, that fatty.

Boll sits down next to Mrs Specht on the swing.

Finally one on one...

MRS SPECHT: I was so looking forward to these few days.

BOLL: Me too.

MRS SPECHT: And now everyone is arguing. I want...I want...

BOLL: Yes, darling...?

MRS SPECHT: *Shouts.* Harmony! *Shakes him.* If I want harmony, I get harmony!

BOLL: Calm down. I'm with you, by your side.

MRS SPECHT: Oh, how nice.

BOLL: I'd like to fool around with you again, my little beauty...

MRS SPECHT: Ah, Rudi...

BOLL: Our little games, hmmm? The ones that gave you so much pleasure. Hmmm?

He tries to pull her towards him. She slides away from him

Lydia, what's wrong with you?

MRS SPECHT: Please keep your legs to yourself at the next meal.

BOLL: Don't you yearn for my legs? That is, don't you yearn for them anymore?

MRS SPECHT: Please don't take it personally.

BOLL: You don't want my legs anymore and I'm not supposed to take it personally? Hold up. You can't treat me like that! You know that I'm only here because of you!

MRS SPECHT: Not so loud. You're here to bestow the world with the play.

BOLL: Without you, I'm fruitless!

Enter Flapke. She leaps up.

FLAPKE: It can't be like this!

MRS SPECHT: What can't be like this!?

BOLL: Everything can be like what Mrs Specht's desires!

You should remember that.

FLAPKE: Reizschneider is a no go. He's too old. Anyway, he's been over publicised as an actor.

MRS SPECHT: And what am I supposed to say?

BOLL: Mr Reizschneider played the Hamlet of century when you sir, were still in nappies!

FLAPKE: Lucky I was in nappies or else I'd done have booed him out....!

MRS SPECHT: I'm slowly having enough of this...

BOLL: Young man, you're an obstacle unto yourself! First, you offend your sponsor – and now you want to get rid of the very person who can guarantee the success of your play.

FLAPKE: Ftttt... do I care...?

BOLL: Mr Flapke, people will come because Reizsneider will be in it!

FLAPKE: People will come because Flapke wrote it!

BOLL: Yes. Later. After your death. But until then you need Reizschneider!

FLAPKE: A burnt – out drunk?

MRS SPECHT: Mr Reizschneider doesn't drink! You novice, silly writer.

Reizschneider enters the stage stumbling around. Behind him is Specht.

SPECHT: Don't act the fool! You'll pay for my Jaguar!

MRS SPECHT: Darling, being courteous doesn't cost anything...

SPECHT: Maybe. But every time I'm courteous, I pay hard for it.

Lydia, I won't be talking to anybody for a while and I ask that that be respected. I ask everyone!

Specht wants to enter the house again. Mrs Dusseldorf steps into his path.

DUESSELDORF: Gerhard, we need to talk.

SPECHT: No!

DUESSELDORF: You won't get out of it.

SPECHT: I'll go ballistic in a minute...

DUESSELDORF: It's important!

Pulls him inside. A very drunk Reizschneider stands blinking his eyes from the sun's rays.

REIZSCHNEIDER: What a beautiful morning.

FLAPKE: Afternoon.

BOLL: Now that you're rested – to work, right?

Reizschneider wants to stretch, doesn't notice the steps at the lower end of the garden and stumbles over them. He makes a few ridiculous movements - eventually manages to regain his balance. The others follow him.

MRS SPECHT: And how do you feel?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Maybe not so bad.

MRS SPECHT: I can tell that you've been working hard lately.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Yes. I'm a little tense.

FLAPKE: That'll all change after the first bottle.

REIZSCHNEIDER: So young? And already so experienced?

BOLL: And such successes already behind him...

MRS SPECHT: This is the author.

BOLL: „Horx – The original sin“. It was a great success among the critics in Hamburg!

REIZSCHNEIDER: In Hamburg?

BOLL: A great success.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Ah, Osterkreuz, right?

BOLL: No, that was somebody else.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Somebody else?

BOLL: Who had success.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Oh – had success.

BOLL: Mr Flapke has also had success.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Oh, nice. Very nice. Onwards and upwards young man.

Flapke drops his head like a bull ready for battle.

BOLL: My surname is Boll.

MRS SPECHT: Boll the publicist. Silence... The Boll. Theatre critic.

BOLL: Yes, if I'm forced – I also write reviews.

REIZSCHNEIDER: That's nice.

BOLL: Have you never heard of me?

REIZSCHNEIDER: No.

BOLL: I slated you once!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Oh right – the, the...Boll! Boll! Of course, I know who you are...!

BOLL: Razor.

REIZSCHNEIDER: You did that one too? I always thought it was two people. What a wonderful day. Boll and razor – two clever personas have suddenly become one. And now they stand before me.

Congratulations.

FLAPKE: What do you think of my play?

REIZSCHNEIDER: I love it.

FLAPKE: And what exactly do you love?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Everything!

FLAPKE: And in particular?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Its brevity. Only twenty-two pages! Only twenty-two pages. Can you believe it! It's brilliant.

FLAPKE: And what was written in it?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Everything...it's all there – intrigue, murder, jealousy -

MRS SPECHT: Yes, really everything!

REIZSCHNEIDER: But humour too!

MRS SPECHT: Lots of humour.

FLAPKE: Where?

REIZSCHNEIDER: A lot of hidden humour...

FLAPKE: Where's the humour?

REIZSCHNEIDER: What?

FLAPKE: Which part of my play makes you laugh?

REIZSCHNEIDER: At the start...then not so much...

FLAPKE: After the murder?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Exactly.

FLAPKE: There's no murder in my play.

BOLL: Suicide. Mr Reizsneider meant suicide.

MRS SPECHT: Well that's obvious.

REIZSCHNEIDER: It's nearly a murder. To be a victim and a murderer at the same time. Terrible. Tragic.

MRS SPECHT: Lord, it's so fascinating. It's the height of talk... Let's have a drink.

FLAPKE: You won't be able to play the role.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Really? And why not young man?

FLAPKE: There are stairs in the set.

Flapke exits. Reizschneider needs to sit down – he flops onto the swing.

Mrs Specht sits next to him. Boll, undecided, stands.

MRS SPECHT: You have to forgive him. Mr Flapke is still very young...

BOLL: And a little nervous.

MRS SPECHT: You'll play the role. I've dreamt of you playing the part.

REIZSCHNEIDER: So you invited me?

MRS SPECHT: Yes. I wanted you to come. And now you're really here.

You're really sitting next to me. For real.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Yes, it's me. In the flesh.

He drinks from a wine glass. Hiccups.

MRS SPECHT: Sorry, I'm a bit anxious.

BOLL: Darling, a long walk will calm you down. There'll be a beautiful sunset tonight.

MRS SPECHT: We'll let the sun set without us today, hmmm? See you later.

Boll leaves sour- faced.

I have to excuse my husband. He had a terrible accident this morning.

REIZSCHNEIDER: What happened?

MRS SPECHT: Someone pushed him off the road. And they just legged it.

REIZSCHNEIDER: The swine. Oh God – you're dressed in black?

MRS SPECHT: Please don't worry yourself. He's fine.

Specht storms out of the house.

SPECHT: Yeah, I am anti-social!

MRS Dusseldorf is hot on his heels.

DUESSELDORF: You have to be responsible for your commitments, Gerhard.

Specht disappears behind the garage. Mrs Dusseldorf goes after him.

REIZSCHNEIDER: So that's your husband.

MRS SPECHT: Yes, healthy and in one piece.

SPECHT: *Off.* Leave me alone!

REIZSCHNEIDER: What's that noise?

MRS SPECHT: Hiccups. I still have them.

REIZSCHNEIDER: No, I meant over there.

MRS SPECHT: The sea.

REIZSCHNEIDER: The sea. Right...so I'm by the sea... Um, I don't know how to begin...Madam...Madam...

MRS SPECHT: Yes?

Boll appears in the distance.

BOLL: Lydia, I'm waiting for you in our favourite place!

Boll backs away.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Lydia – I'm going to call you Lydia if that's OK?

MRS SPECHT: Yes... we don't have to be formal.

REIZSCHNEIDER: We don't.

MRS SPECHT: I've never been on first name terms with someone so fast!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Sometimes you have to have a first time.

So, Lydia– She looks at him, hiccups, turns her head...

what's wrong?

MRS SPECHT: Ah, those eyes...

REIZSCHNEIDER: Oh yes. *Puts on his sunglasses.* Lydia, I am a little embarrassed...It's about my fee..!

Wolkowski enters from the beach.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Good morning, Wolli. Busy as a bee already?

WOLKOWSKI: Good morning, Mrs Specht. Tobias, I've tried to read the play. We have to talk. Now.

Walks to the house.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Mrs Specht-

MRS SPECHT: Lydia...we're on first name terms!

REIZSCHNEIDER: You're right – Lydia...it's about my fee...Would a small advance be possible? Not that I really need it – just to be sure, that the project will go ahead.

MRS SPECHT: That's no problem.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Say about seventy percent?

MRS SPECHT: No problem.

REIZSCHNEIDER: You know, I've been looking forward to this job for a year.

MRS SPECHT: Lovely. But we only met three months ago.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Really? You see, I have this feeling that we've known each other for longer.

MRS SPECHT: I feel the same.

He rubs the side of his head. Your head hurts?

REIZSCHNEIDER: A bit.

MRS SPECHT: Shall I bring you some painkillers?

REIZSCHNEIDER: No, no. I know this home remedy.

He wants to get up, falls back.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Ouch...

MRS SPECHT: What's wrong?

REIZSCHNEIDER: My shoulder...there's something wrong my shoulder...?

MRS SPECHT: It's from the fall.

REIZSCHNEIDER: The fall? Hold on...I'm curious. What fall?

MRS SPECHT: Into the pool. This morning.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Right. So I wanted a swim?

MRS SPECHT: No. The pool was empty.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Oh, so I was quite hammered, right?

MRS SPECHT: It happens to the best of great artists. From time to time.

REIZSCHNEIDER: That's what I say to myself every day.

MRS SPECHT: Does it still hurt?

REIZSCHNEIDER: No. *She squeezes his shoulder. Ouch!!*

MRS SPECHT: But it hurts - I'll massage you.

REIZSCHNEIDER: But-

MRS SPECHT: No arguments! Lie down. *Mrs Specht massages him, the swing swings.* You're so delicate...sensitive...Do you have anyone to look after you?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wolli tries his best. *Boll hides behind a corner, stares at the swinging swing.*

Ohhhhhhh! Right there.

MRS SPECHT: I adore you. As an actor, first and foremost.

REIZSCHNEIDER: That I can believe. Ohhhh!

MRS SPECHT: Do you ever fall in love with your leading ladies?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Never. People get to know each other too quickly and too well.

Boll edges close.

Oh, that's so good. Deeper...deeper...

MRS SPECHT: Even deeper?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Yes – please...Ohhh! There...there – I'll be damned – you do it so well!

MRS SPECHT: Do you know Lawrence? D.H. Lawrence?

REIZSCHNEIDER: A bit deeper still, please – yes!

MRS SPECHT: He believed that life should be erotic...charged – a primal, carnal energy...

REIZSCHNEIDER: Oh, that's so good. Harder! Ohhhhh –

MRS SPECHT: Relax.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Ohhhhhh!

Boll stands behind the swing.

BOLL: I understand.

MRS Specht sits.

MRS SPECHT: What do you understand?

BOLL: I understand that you misunderstood D.H. Lawrence! *Walks around the swing.* He didn't mean hedonistic, free copulation! Everywhere and with everyone!

MRS SPECHT: The sun hasn't set yet!

BOLL: It only waits for you.

MRS SPECHT: In that case, it won't set today.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Yes, so in that case I'll...

MRS SPECHT: No – please?

BOLL: The whisky is in the bar at the top on the left.

REIZSCHNEIDER: No. At the bottom on the right.

Reizschneider snakes his way back to the house.

MRS SPECHT: What are you playing at?

BOLL: I've just been replaced, right? That's why he just had to play the role. That's why!

MRS SPECHT: I respect Mr Reizschneider as an artist!

BOLL: I am about to die laughing...

Specht, running away from Mrs Dusseldorff, appears on the main terrace, notices the both of them, listens in whilst edging closer.

MRS SPECHT: I respect you too.

BOLL: As a man?

MRS SPECHT: As a free spirit.

BOLL: Yes. I feel like that too. Like the spirit of your dead lover. Lord, Lydia – don't you remember what we had?

MRS SPECHT: I do. I remember perfectly well.

BOLL: And despite that, you only respect me as a free spirit?

MRS SPECHT: That's exactly why I do.

BOLL: That can't be true... you didn't say that..?

MRS SPECHT: And you still can?

BOLL: What?

MRS SPECHT: I thought that...you really can't?

BOLL: I didn't start it immediately...because, I, I ...I wanted to properly prepare...

MRS SPECHT: Oh, yes. That's why there were the eternal questions. I always felt like I was going through an MOT.

Carmen exits the house.

CARMEN: Excuse me, sir...

BOLL: I don't understand.

CARMEN: There's a fax for you!

Mrs Specht freezes.

SPECHT: Fax?! What an adventure! Lydia – fax!

Specht runs to the house.

BOLL: So you just want to be fucked – a quick, no – nonsense bang.

Yes, yes?

MRS SPECHT: Give it a rest. Everyone does as one can. You're more of a theorist.

BOLL: Ha! I'll prove to you that you're wrong.

Enter Flapke.

FLAPKE: MR Reizschneider has breakfast in the bar. He won't play my Henry! Never. End of!

MRS SPECHT: Yes? And if I want him to play the role?

FLAPKE: I'm the author!

BOLL: I think you should respect the author's will.

MRS SPECHT: Oh, yes? Fine. As you want. Shame. The theatre has just let me know that they'll willingly agree to a premiere with Mr Reizsneider playing the leading role. What is that young author called – the one who called me...?

BOLL: Osterkreuz – Dankwart Osterkreuz.

MRS SPECHT: There was a role for Reizschneider in his play too. Yes – they'll definitely...what was his...?

BOLL: Osterkreuz.

MRS SPECHT: They'll definitely want to stage his play as well. Excuse me I have to make a phone call.

BOLL: No matter whether it's Flapke or Osterkreuz. Reizschneider is a nuisance. A drunk! He'll ruin the whole thing!

FLAPKE: Mrs Specht! I've given some thought...something more mature would benefit the role...my Henry is a man who is prematurely old – destroyed by internal and external battle. Yes - that's how it is.

MRS SPECHT: I thought so too. It's like it were written for him. Right?

FLAPKE: Nearly.

BOLL: How did you come to such a change of heart?

FLAPKE: Can't a person change his mind?

BOLL: It's pure opportunism!

FLAPKE: You were just defending him?

BOLL: I had a change of heart as well. Most of all – I observed him very carefully.

MRS SPECHT: Give it a rest! Reizschneider has been cast. Full stop.

Enters the house.

BOLL: *Shouts after her.* . You're cheapening the play – and betraying others! *To Flapke* Careerist!

Goes after her. Flapke clutches his head. Carmen exits carrying drinks.

CARMEN: Everything all right?

FLAPKE: No, I am a cowardly, spineless swine.

CARMEN: We're all like that in parts.

Enter Reizschneider accompanied by Margit.

FLAPKE: In that case, everything's fine. Everything's as it was.

Haughtiness prevails. Bring me some coffee.

Carmen exits. Flapke sits at the table. Reizschneider heads towards the beach with Margit.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Yes, haughtiness –it's bad, awful.

MARGIT: Could I ask what you do for a living?

REIZSCHNEIDER: You don't know who I am?

MARGIT: No.

REIZSCHNEIDER: You've never seen me before?

MARGIT: No.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Not even on the television?

MARGIT: No

REIZSCHNEIDER: My surname is Reizschneider.

MARGIT: Are you Specht's business partner?

REIZSCHNEIDER: I'm an artist.

MARGIT: Do you do designs for his nappy company?

REIZSCHNEIDER: I'm an actor.

MARGIT: What, what's your surname?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Reizschneider.

MARGIT: Reizschneider... Reizschneider... hold on a minute... I saw a great Hamlet twenty years ago in Hamburg...

REIZSCHNEIDER: Well, that's me.

MARGIT: Was you.

Looks at her shiftily.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I think we've met somewhere before. What do you do?

MARGIT: I'm a rubbish bin. I read texts for a certain publisher, which have been rejected by the editors and then write concrete reasons of why they were rejected.

At the top, on the terrace, appears Wolkowski. He is waving a copy around – agitated.

WOLKOWSKI: Wait!

Runs down to them.

MARGIT: You read it. I can tell.

Wolkowski wants to say something- starts, looks at Flapke, stops and waves the copy around desperately.

MARGIT: Yes. It's shocking. See you later.

Margit exits to the left to the beach.

WOLKOWSKI: She read it. I read it – you too?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Of course.

WOLKOWSKI: And?

REIZSCHNEIDER: It's quite good

WOLKOWSKI: You haven't read it! It's the biggest pile of sh...

REIZSCHNEIDER: Not so loud!

WOLKOWSKI: The biggest sh...ame, which has happened to me in my life.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Stop it – it's not that bad.

WOLKOWSKI: You haven't read it! – What's the main character called?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Not now...

WOLKOWSKI: What's the name of the play?

REIZSCHNEIDER: It was something...quite interesting...

WOLKOWSKI: „Spasm” It's called „spasm”. I should have known from the start! And you know who I was supposed to play? A gay barman who falls in love with you and sets it as his mission to rescue you!

REIZSCHNEIDER: An interesting task.

WOLKOWSKI: You haven't read it!

REIZSCHNEIDER: I skimmed through it.

WOLKOWSKI: From a distance.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I think it's great.

WOLKOWSKI: What's up with you?

REIZSCHNEIDER: A great play.

WOLKOWSKI: We can't play in it!

REIZSCHNEIDER: *Seriously*. I have to play in it.

Flapke heads away from the beach.

WOLKOWSKI: Ah, we've just been talking about your play!

FLAPKE: And?

WOLKOWSKI: One big pile of...

REIZSCHNEIDER: What an honoured task it is to play in it.

WOLKOWSKI: I've never read anything like it!

REIZSCHNEIDER: ...Something so fantastic! It's going to be very interesting. .

WOLKOWSKI: Even the language is...

REIZSCHNEIDER: Great poetry...

WOLKOWSKI: It's just...it's just...

FLAPKE: Please. You don't have to flatter me. I hate that. We'll talk later. During the rehearsals.

Flapke exits left to the beach.

WOLKOWSKI: What is wrong with you? You can't be that drunk!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wolli, I need the money!

WOLKOWSKI: Nobody will be able to afford the damages!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Sixty thousand...

WOLKOWSKI: Sixty thousand...? That's not – not that little. But in any case, to hell with it!

REIZSCHNEIDER: My bar has gone bust!

WOLKOWSKI: Tobias...? You ploughed all your money into it?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Let's say most of it.

WOLKOWSKI: And the rest of it you spent in the bar every night!

REIZSCHNEIDER: I'm ruined.

WOLKOWSKI: Stop it.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I can't...

WOLKOWSKI: Give it a rest. I stopped believing your tears a long time ago.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wolli...They've just fired me from the soap!

WOLKOWSKI: No...?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Yes! They just kicked me out!

WOLKOWSKI: Oh God...that's a shock. But it's your own fault.

REIZSCHNEIDER: They fired you too!

WOLKOWSKI: I was waiting for it.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wolli – you too!

WOLKOWSKI: And those are the repercussions...

REIZSCHNEIDER: They fired you too, Wolli!

WOLKOWSKI: Me? But why? What I have got to do with your antics?

REIZSCHNEIDER: I don't know either...In any case; I fought for you like a lioness. But they say you function only as my assistant. *Break.* I'm sorry. I know that you liked the role.

WOLKOWSKI: I hated it!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Well then it's a good thing...

WOLKOWSKI: I don't get it...after fifteen years...just like that... Everything behind our backs – a kick in the teeth and a knife in the back! Despite everything, I'm not going to act in this shit. I'd rather play the third pageboy in „ Sleeping Beauty“ then that stammering barman.

REIZSCHNEIDER: The play is linked with the contract in the ad.

WOLKOWSKI: And what? For once in your life, be a little more ambitious.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wollli, I'll share it with you my friend.

WOLKOWSKI: Oh, give me a break.

REIZSCHNEIDER: One hundred thousand! I'm going to get one hundred thousand for that ad.

WOLKOWSKI: One hundred thousand. O.K. I don't know why, to tell you the truth – but I'll try.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Thank you, Wollli! Thank you!

WOLKOWSKI: One hundred thousand...

REIZSCHNEIDER: And what's the play about exactly?

WOLKOWSKI: Oh!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Short synopsis. Hit me with it!

WOLKOWSKI: It can't be explained.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Well, that's something.

MARGIT: *off* But you wanted to talk to me

Flapke enters from the left.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Ah! I'm happy now!

Flapke disappears to the right – right after Margit appears from the right.

MARGIT: And? Should I tell him?!

WOLKOWSKI: What?

MARGIT: That you're rejecting the roles.

WOLKOWSKI: I have to go clean my seashells.

Goes to the house.

MARGIT: So no? Shame...You used to be somebody. You used to show people things, which they never knew about before.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Oh really? ...And now ...?

MARGIT: And now you're just a performing monkey, which pulls stupid faces with sadness in his eyes.

REIZSCHNEIDER: How can you say such a thing...?

MARGIT: Perhaps it hurts me more than it hurts you?

Mrs Specht with a fleeting step enters through the garden.

MRS SPECHT: Excuse me; all misunderstandings have been cleared up. Will you – are you both ok?

MARGIT: First rate.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I want something more.

MARGIT: Yes, to get the dough.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Who do you think you are to dare say such a thing!
I am in the encyclopaedia!

Reizschneider walks towards the beach...

MRS SPECHT: Margit...?

Specht appears on the terrace.

MARGIT: We're all prostitutes, isn't that right?

SPECHT: You have to stare truth in the eyes.

MRS SPECHT: But she's lying.

SPECHT: We've got no chance in the long run.

MRS SPECHT: How can you say such a thing?

SPECHT: I know what I'm saying.

MRS SPECHT: How can you say something like that about us?

SPECHT: What? No – I meant the firm. The quarterly balance has just come in. It's a tragedy .It's the dip in population growth's fault. Less children – less nappies!

MRS SPECHT: Oh Gerhard, it'll be all right.

SPECHT: Be all right? Do you think they'll shit more on my behalf?

MRS SPECHT: Gerard ! I can't bear to listen to you...

SPECHT: Then don't. I can't finance the play now.

MRS SPECHT: What? Because you don't want to...

SPECHT: It's impossible. There's just too many old people around these day....

MARGIT: Don't old people need nappies too?

SPECHT: Hold on -you mean nappies for old people?

MARGIT: And that less and less people can afford dentures – maybe bringing in a new line of baby food onto the market would be a good idea. You could do a deal with a supermarket chain in Hamburg. "Geri-mash... Liquid burger in a jar".

SPECHT: *Laughing.* That's genius!

MARGIT: And Reizsneider can promote the new range on television.

SPECHT: As himself? Reizschneider in nappies?

MRS SPECHT: Margit!?

SPECHT: The firm is saved!

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard, you're not serious?!

SPECHT: Reizschneider has swallowed the bait. I've got to use this situation to my advantage.

MARGIT: A bit of a shocking type of ad...

MRS SPECHT: Enough of the jokes.

SPECHT: I hope he'll go for it...

MARGIT: Oh, just wave a few banknotes in front of those big blue eyes and he'll do anything.

MRS SPECHT: Margit, enough! She invites herself over and then puts down everything and everyone.

SPECHT: It was just a joke, leave it out.

MRS SPECHT: And you know why she wants to spoil everything for me?! Because her life didn't work out. But that's not my fault. Deal with it. Pack your bags and get out. I don't want to see you again!

MARGIT: Then, for the first time in our lives, we want the same thing.

MRS Specht exits.

SPECHT: Are you really sisters?

MARGIT: No. We just pretend. Her mother married my father. And you. Are you really a couple?

SPECHT: Can't you tell? Why do I only attract women like Lydia?

MARGIT: The type of fish you get depends on the bait.

MRS Duesseldorff exits from the corner.

DUESSELDORF: Gerhard, I thought you were a respectable man.

SPECHT: But I'm not. And I don't want to be!

DUESSELDORF: We have to talk nevertheless.

SPECHT: Maybe you'd like to eat something, hmm?

DUESSELDORF: I'm not hungry.

SPECHT: That's shame.

DUESSELDORF: Why?

SPECHT: Because you're a respectable person and you don't talk with your mouth full.

MRS Duesseldorff leaves, offended. She emits a long animal like sound.

I'm sorry – I repent for all my sins.

MARGIT: Why is a man like you so rich?

SPECHT: I don't know otherwise. Are you really leaving?

MARGIT: You heard. I have to.

SPECHT: Shame. You're the only person I can stand. Up to a certain degree, that is. Don't go. Stay. Keep me company.

MARGIT: Doing what?

SPECHT: I want to hang myself.

MARGIT: Why did you have to get married again?

SPECHT: A wife is a fundamental. For someone of my stature, in any case. And don't think that I don't know what Lydia is up to. I know what was – what is- and what will be. There were many – there is Boll – and Reizsneider is next.

MARGIT: You're not at all jealous?

SPECHT: I'm trying to be. But it's not working out. I'm not interested! And it's like that with everything. Things just fall to the wayside. I can't touch anything! But everything annoys me! I want to escape from here, but I don't know where to. I'd like to stay but I've got nobody to stay with! And so I sit and listen to the screeching seagulls. I'm miserable. A fat pig – a piggy bank on the way to the abattoir. So you see, hanging myself would be a great alternative.

MARGIT: Yes, we'll both have a go – but later. Before that lets have a little fun.

SPECHT: Fun. God. I've done everything that's fun!

MARGIT: Maybe not everything?

SPECHT: Everything! I'm rich. I have a duty to have fun.

MARGIT: I haven't met a more pitiful creature than you! And you know why? Because all you do is moan.

SPECHT: And what am I supposed to do?!

MARGIT: Defend yourself!

SPECHT: How?

MARGIT: We'll give them something to sweat about. For example – you can make Flapke change the play – the climax of the play will be about nappies...

SPECHT: Oh...*silence*. Yes!!!...*gets up*. Margit, Margit... that would really be something to enjoy. Just one qualm. He won't go for it.

MARGIT: He will. I'll bet on it. Nobody's going to want to miss a dance at this ball of vanity. And if he doesn't – all the better for you.

SPECHT: Why?

MARGIT: Think about it. Then you have a reason –

SPECHT: Not to pay! You're right. And they'll get out of here – and I won't have to pay!

Flapke enters from the right. Specht doesn't notice him.

I won't have to talk to anyone – and I won't have to pay!

MARGIT: Gerhard?

SPECHT: I won't have to pay and I can finally have a holiday! Without all these ticks!

MARGIT: Gerhard, there...Mr Flapke!

SPECHT: Aha.... You think that – now?

MARGIT: Yes. At once.

SPECHT: What should I say?

MARGIT: What shall these new nappies for old people be called?

SPECHT: Murmli. Senior. – Prosenior. Murmli Prosenior.

MARGIT: Excellent. *Flapke tries to sneak past undetected.*

Ah, Mr Flapke, please do join us. We were just talking about your play.

FLAPKE: I know what you think of it?

MARGIT: Mr Specht and I read it again together and we have to revise our opinion. It's great.

SPECHT: A super – script. Fantastic death.

MARGIT: A milestone.

SPECHT: So much action!

FLAPKE: Please don't flatter me.

Flapke wants to go into the house.

MARGIT: One more thing! A tiny detail. The nappies and Murmli have to be written in.

FLAPKE: Sorry?

SPECHT: Are missing.

FLAPKE: I don't understand?

MARGIT: So, Mr Specht would like something mentioned in the monologue on the bridge about the nappies and their name – „Murmli“.

FLAPKE: Nappies and Murmli?

MARGIT: Exactly. Murmli is the brand name of this new line of nappy. Murmli. Prosenior.

SPECHT: Product placement. I always try and kill two birds with one stone.

FLAPKE: I understand. But I can't agree to your wish.

SPECHT: A wish? Young man, every time I had a wish, it never realised.

MARGIT: Yes – it's all an art of giving and taking.

Silence. Flapke goes on the terrace and stops by the table with the cakes.

SPECHT: That's the way artists are. He has started to think about it...

Flapke pours himself some coffee and drinks it in one swig.

FLAPKE: Thinking about it...putting it into consideration...I...

MARGIT: Yes?

Another coffee.

FLAPKE: I have an idea forming...

SPECHT: Yes ?

MARGIT: Has it formed?

FLAPKE: Yes.

Margit and Specht stand behind him

SPECHT: And...?

MARGIT: Is it there?

Flapke stalls

FLAPKE: I'll be back in a minute.

SPECHT: We're counting on you. *Flapke enters the house.* Will he or won't he...

MARGIT: He will... *Mrs Specht exits the house unnoticed.* Everything will work out!

SPECHT: In any case – it does give me a great source of pleasure

MRS SPECHT: Something give you pleasure?

SPECHT: Yes! This project has suddenly given me pleasure.

MRS SPECHT: What happened?

SPECHT: Your sister has talked some sense into me.

MARGIT: Lydia, I must apologise. From now on, I'll be more restrained. I promise. And I'll apologise to Mr Reizschneider.

MRS SPECHT: *Touched.* Oh... my dear ones.

SPECHT: We love you too.

MARGIT: Family is most important...

MRS SPECHT: Tonight we'll have steak. I promise.

SPECHT: Thank you. My darling, faithful wife...

Flapke stands in the doorway.

MRS SPECHT: Mr Flapke, I'm happy! My husband will no longer work against us – he will work with us.

SPECHT: He will contribute an idea or maybe even a few?

MRS SPECHT: Please, please! Why not? I love you. I have to tend to the guests now.

MRS Specht enters the house.

MARGIT: And?

FLAPKE: So – the nappies and...?

SPECHT: Murmli.

FLAPKE: Murmli. The nappies and Murmli...and without it?

MARGIT: Well without it...

Margit and Specht shrug their shoulders...

FLAPKE: I understand.

SPECHT: Everyone's entitled to a little pleasure.

Act III

Evening. Carmen is setting out chairs on the balcony. MRS DUESSELDORF quietly sobbing sits under the wall on a stone. She wears a rather inelegant evening gown holding a huge hat. MRS SPECHT stands next to her.

MRS SPECHT: Lotte, it is not like that. You have made it all up. We all really, really love you!

DUESSELDORF: If I died right at this table, nobody would notice!

MRS SPECHT: We'd all really miss you. What a lovely evening.

DUESSELDORF: Yes... to fall in love...

MRS SPECHT: Look – there's a sailboat over there! How delightful...

DUESSELDORF: Yes... *MRS DUESSELDORF starts crying again.* A lonely sailboat amidst a sea of light blue waves...It's hard being lonely. I don't know why I'm here?

MRS SPECHT: Because I need you. Because you're my friend...Because...

DUESSELDORF: Because...

MRS SPECHT: I promised I wouldn't say anything. But I think you should know. Boll asked that you come.

DUESSELDORF: Boll? You're mad.

MRS SPECHT: He's into you.

DUESSELDORF: Stop it. He's after you.

MRS SPECHT: Me? God. No. I just annoy him. Haven't you noticed how aggressive he is towards me?

DUESSELDORF: But he won't even look at me.

MRS SPECHT: That's the best proof. He's shy.

DUESSELDORF: Him?

MRS SPECHT: He's really a shy human being. Believe me- he's head over heels for you...

DUESSELDORF: Really? What are you trying to tell me? I weigh eighty-four kilos.

MRS SPECHT: Eighty-five. But he's only a vegetarian while eating.

DUESSELDORF: What does that mean?

MRS SPECHT: He likes to grab hold of a little meat.

DUESSELDORF: Really? – How do you know?

MRS SPECHT: He opens up to me from time to time.

Boll exits the house. He's coming. Get ready!

Boll sits a large distance away... MRS DUESSELDORF puts on her hat and smiles at him warmly – he shoots a forced smile back. Show him your legs. Good. Go on. Encourage him.

To Boll. Doesn't she look amazing?

BOLL: Yes, an unforgettable sight.

DUESSELDORF: I always buy my summer attire in Milan.

BOLL: I heard that the best Italian designers are in China.

Globalisation.

DUESSELDORF: Well in that case next time I will head to China.

BOLL: Yes, I recommend it.

Specht, Flapke, Margit exit the house. Flapke brings out a flask of coffee, drinks some and paces up and down.

SPECHT: *Relief in his voice...* Carmen, I congratulate you on the steaks. Bloody like from a wild jungle.

BOLL: We're not beasts.

SPECHT: But you did behave in a rather animalistic way. Let's talk man to man: why did you rub your leg against my thigh? I'd like you to be aware that I am not that way inclined. Perhaps it wasn't meant for me?

MRS SPECHT: Maybe he was looking for Mrs Duesseldorff's thigh?

SPECHT: No? Yes? Mrs Duesseldorf?

DUESSELDORF: I don't think that's any of your business.

SPECHT: Congratulations Lotte. He's a very sensitive man.

BOLL: Well, something will start at last.

REIZSCHNEIDER and WOLKOWSKI appear. REIZSCHNEIDER is blind drunk.

WOLKOWSKI: I'm not going to pretend that it doesn't sit comfortably with me. Open first rehearsal. I feel like I'm playing the lead role in a vivisection.

REIZSCHNEIDER: But we accept the challenge?

WOLKOWSKI: Mr Flapke – one question first: we'll do a small cut from here to here?

SPECHT: There won't be any cuts. Or else I'll cut something else off.

WOLKOWSKI: Either, or...yes?

REIZSCHNEIDER: All or nothing.

FLAPKE: Exactly yes?

REIZSCHNEIDER: In that case – all! The whole mystical, mysterious text.

SPECHT: The scene on the bridge, please.

MRS SPECHT: You know the play?

REIZSCHNEIDER: The scene on the bridge?

SPECHT: I'm forking out so I desire the scene on the bridge. It's moving. For me, at least.

MRS SPECHT: You really read it?

SPECHT: Have I ever bought anything I'm not familiar with. Go on.

FLAPKE: So, the scene on the bridge. *Hands the actors new sheets...* This is the edge of the bridge's rail. The audience is the precipice...

MRS SPECHT: How poetic.

BOLL: And real.

FLAPKE: Mr Reizschneider! Please read the first sentence of the stage directions. Loud.

REIZSCHNEIDER: *Reads.* Henry stands on the bridge near the port late at night and is not an alcoholic. He is not drunk.

FLAPKE: Understand?

REIZSCHNEIDER: I'd like to make other assumptions – but as you wish.

FLAPKE: This is what happens: Henry throws himself against the rails of the bridge and looks into the precipice below. After his opening monologue, Meltur runs over and tries to reason with him. To convince him to keep on living. Understood so far?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Sure.

WOLKOWSKI: Sure. What's the point of rehearsing it?

SPECHT: Let's begin.

DUESSELDORF: Oh, how exciting!

A seminal moment... *REIZSCHNEIDER reads in a dramatic voice.*

REIZSCHNEIDER: Where does the night creak? Ah! She escaped from me and bears its ugly teeth. Who lead me to this place of the womb's watergate. In my stomach flint I chew, that...

WOLKOWSKI: Sorry, why does he say 'where does the night creak'?

FLAPKE: The crane in the port creaks in the distance. Haven't you read the stage directions?

REIZSCHNEIDER: So it's the crane creaking. I get it!

See – everything has it's logic. That's why you need a director! Thank you. *Resumes his position.* Where does the night creak? – Ah! She escaped from me and bears its ugly teeth. Who lead me to this place of the womb's watergate. In my stomach flint I chew, that...

WOLKOWSKI: And what does: 'she escaped from me and bears its ugly teeth' mean

FLAPKE: I knew he'd give us trouble...Please read the author's notes – Above him a plane has just taken off! Right, once again.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Where does the night creak? Ah! She escaped from me and bears its ugly teeth. Who lead me to this place of the womb's watergate. In my stomach flint I chew, that pulls me down...

Wolkowski runs in

WOLKOWSKI: Hey, Henry! Don't skin yourself...

FLAPKE: You've entered too early. He's still got some text left.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I know the problem.

FLAPKE: Go on!

WOLKOWSKI: A plane bearing its teeth? How did you come up with that metaphor?

FLAPKE: The moment I put myself in his shoes.

WOLKOWSKI: Ah, yes.

BOLL: But it makes no sense!

SPECHT: Go on! There's a match on TV.

BOLL: Please try to remember that Henry is fighting for his mental health!

WOLKOWSKI: All of us, along with him, will lose the fight.

FLAPKE: Again! From the top – no stopping!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Where does the night creak? Ah! She escaped from me and bears its ugly teeth. Who lead me to this place of the womb's watergate. In my stomach flint I chew, that pulls me down and up!

FLAPKE: And up!

REIZSCHNEIDER: And up!

WOLKOWSKI: Excuse me – but isn't that a slight contradiction– stones in the stomach which pull me down and then up?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Cut it out!

FLAPKE: There was an author's note! Up onto the rail – he wants to jump!

REIZSCHNEIDER: You see – up! That’s superb.

SPECHT: If someone asks one more thing, I’ll be really fucked off.

REIZSCHNEIDER: In my stomach flint I chew, that pulls me down...

Jumps onto the rail...

Out of my way – fear, you primordial lizard of cracked and blistered skin. Out of my way!

Jumps off the rail... Wolkowski runs in– looks.

FLAPKE: What now? – your friend has come to save you – And you already jumped! Well? The play would end there!

BOLL: He doesn’t know what he’s playing.

WOLKOWSKI: But he wants to kill himself anyway.

FLAPKE: But not yet.

WOLKOWSKI: Why not? That would have been a great cut.

SPECHT: I’ll write the play myself. I’ve had enough.

MRS SPECHT: You’ll stay put.

FLAPKE: Go on.

Reizschneider climbs up on the rail.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Out of my way!

Wolkowski runs in.

WOLKOWSKI: Hey, Henry! Don't skin yourself...

REIZSCHNEIDER: Leave me be. Like a slim string between the earth's and the sky's thorn I swim in the middle quivering for a pure sound.

WOLKOWSKI: Hold on to love!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Leave me be!

WOLKOWSKI: Throw yourself at life. In the delight of grub...

Wolkowski forcefully pulls him off the rail.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Ouch! Are you mad?

WOLKOWSKI: I'm supposed to save you.

REIZSCHNEIDER: You did that on purpose!

WOLKOWSKI: That's what it says in the stage directions.

REIZSCHNEIDER: That you break my ribs?!

WOLKOWSKI: What a diva!

FLAPKE: Again!

REIZSCHNEIDER: No. I've been saved.

SPECHT: Go on, at once! My favourite part is coming up!

Reizschneider and Wolkowski push each other.

WOLKOWSKI: The world does not promise without reason!

REIZSCHNEIDER: You, you – you dare to speak so, you’re so dazzling and young!

BOLL: Dazzling and young – that’ll be a bit hard.

REIZSCHNEIDER: The world has injured me – you can see on the outside what is devouring me from the inside.

WOLKOWSKI: So, go on - jump. Bathe in mercy over yourself.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Leave me be! I’ve lost myself. Because I found what I wasn’t looking for. I-don’t-want – to – look -any -longer.

WOLKOWSKI: Ah, my Murmli – ah my Murmli ...?!!!

SPECHT: Bravo.

Pause.

FLAPKE: Go on. Go on.

SPECHT: Ah, my Murmli?

WOLKOWSKI: Ah, my Murmli...

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard...

WOLKOWSKI: Ah, my Murmli-

SPECHT: First you speak with death –

WOLKOWSKI: If only to lie in nappies again...!

BOLL: Stop! Stop! You're betraying your own text young man...

Murkli – nappies. What is this?

SPECHT: He just knows who he's working for.

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard?!

WOLKOWSKI: But I don't – what's going on?! Murkli? I don't get it.

Explain please. You want a comedy? Yes? Then I'll suggest something completely different. Then both I and the audience will understand what's going on!

SPECHT: What's up with him? It's a great play.

WOLKOWSKI: *To Margit.* Do you think so too?

MARGIT: A great play.

WOLKOWSKI: I need a break. We'll try again tomorrow.

FLAPKE: No! Now!

WOLKOWSKI: Break! Break! Break!

Wolkowski grabs a bottle of cognac tips it and gulps it down.

REIZSCHNEIDER tries to take the bottle. WOLKOWSKI escapes towards the beach with the bottle.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Do you always have to copy me?

BOLL: You are really excellent in that part. Yes – you play a lover brilliantly despite your age. But you can't do anymore.

MRS SPECHT: You should be ashamed!

BOLL: You shouldn't be ashamed of the truth!

Exits in a theatrical manner. Mrs, DUESSELDORF walks behind him.

FLAPKE: Are you happy?

SPECHT: Very. Very happy.

Flapke exits.

MRS SPECHT: Blackmailer!

SPECHT: If you give you expect something in return.

MRS SPECHT: Sometimes I don't know why I'm still with you.

SPECHT: Have a good think

MARGIT: Mr Reizschneider I have to apologise to you. I know now that it wasn't about the money, but about the play. It'll be a exciting theatrical night. Thank you.

SPECHT: I'm going to watch the match.

MRS SPECHT: I need to go for a walk. Will you accompany me?

REIZSCHNEIDER: No, I'm tired.

SPECHT: You should go. It's dangerous for a woman to walk on her own.

REIZSCHNEIDER: But -

SPECHT: No arguments. Let's say that you work for me.

MARGIT: But the man's totally exhausted.

SPECHT: The fresh air will do him good.

MRS SPECHT: Goodnight darling. *Kisses his forehead.* Are you coming?

REIZSCHNEIDER and Mrs SPECHT exit towards the beach.

SPECHT: I have a bad feeling.

MARGIT: Why?

SPECHT: They'll do this play and I'll have to pay for it all!

MARGIT: Calm down. It's not over yet. Tomorrow morning you'll talk with Reizschneider about the ad for the new nappies.

You'll make a condition – that Wolkowski will take part in it. Without Wolkowski – there's no ad. Wolkowski will feed Reizschneider with a new range of 'baby food'.

SPECHT: In nappies. Both in nappies?

MARGIT: Both in nappies...

SPECHT: And we'll do a rehearsal at once, of course.

MARGIT: And record it!

SPECHT: They won't go for it. And then I'll give up on the whole thing.

BOLL exits the house. Margit enters the house.

SPECHT: I'll guess. You're looking for my wife?

BOLL: Yes, I'd like to apologise to her.

SPECHT: Lydia is with Reiszneider on the beach. I asked him to accompany her. So that nothing happens to her. It's so dark on the beach.

BOLL: Yes...

SPECHT: Do you hear the cicadas? It's their mating call. Yes, a night for those in love. Goodnight. Sweet dreams.

Specht enters the house.

BOLL: Old fool.

BOLL stands by the table. Behind him Wolkowski returns, drinks the last dregs from the bottle, slides along the wall looking straight ahead.

I won't let myself be treated like this. *WOLKOWSKI notices him, watches him. I'll... I'll... WOLKOWSKI puts a fork into his pocket. Mrs Duesseldorff appears in a dressing gown on the balcony.*

DUESSELDORF: You can't sleep either?

BOLL: Why don't you come down.

DUESSELDORF: Dressed as I am?

BOLL: At once.

DUESSELDORF: Mr Boll...!?

BOLL: Now...

She disappears from the balcony. He steals another fork. Mrs Dusseldorf runs out of the house excitedly.

DUESSELDORF: I'm here.

BOLL: Follow me.

DUESSELDORF: Where?

BOLL: To the beach!

DUESSELDORF: Oh...

BOLL: I want you.

DUESSELDORF: You beast...!

BOLL: Yes or no?

DUESSELDORF: Well, since you're asking - then yes.

Pulls her to the beach.

WOLKOWSKI: Either I'm drunk or he's stealing forks.

INTERVAL

ACT IV

Early next day.

An anxious Flapke sits by the breakfast table. He pours himself some coffee and then jumps out of his seat and sits back down – he does this a few times. Carmen brings out a fresh pot of coffee.

FLAPKE: Hanging? So passé. Shooting? Everybody does that. Throw yourself under a car? Stupid. Poison yourself? How awful. Slit your wrists? Takes too long and too much of a mess. Crush your head in a lift? Yes, maybe that's it...

CARMEN: Problems?

FLAPKE: No, no. I'm looking for the right way to kill myself.

FLAPKE fills another cup.

CARMEN: That's your twelfth cup.

FLAPKE gets up forcefully.

FLAPKE: You want to control me? Well? Well...

CARMEN: If you want to talk, I'll be in the kitchen.

Carmen enters the house. Reizschneider, drunk, carefully walks outside. Flapke paces up and down, kicks over the chair, picks it up,

paces again, slams his fist on the table, stares at Reizschneider, paces again. Sighs and grumbles throughout.

FLAPKE: Today we'll ask ourselves questions with no answers and we'll answer them. Understand?! We'll find an answer!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Definitely.

Flapke downs another.

FLAPKE: How weak – what weaknesses – what weak points do you see in my play?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Well, it would be hard to pinpoint even one.

FLAPKE: What – excuse me? What do you mean by that?

REIZSCHNEIDER: It's a great play – brilliant in it's courage.

FLAPKE edges closer.

FLAPKE: Weak points?!

REIZSCHNEIDER: What?

FLAPKE: What can you criticise?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Who wants to criticise it...

FLAPKE: Me!

REIZSCHNEIDER: *Shouts.* Give it a rest. If you fuck up the play – you have me to bloody deal with!

FLAPKE: Are you being honest?

REIZSCHNEIDER: I love it!

FLAPKE: *Quietly.* The suicide is not quite like I imagine it yet...But what do you think about this...he lies on the floor, puts his head in the shaft of the lift. Then hears the lift moving above him and then...

REIZSCHNEIDER: And then?

FLAPKE: The end. What do you think?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Well...what a death!

FLAPKE: Is it a good death?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Death is death.

FLAPKE: There is something like a stupid death. And I'm of the opinion that this a stupid death. As stupid as the rest of the play!!! ha! ha!
Don't say a word.

FLAPKE drinks another cup of coffee and runs into the house.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I didn't give him credit.

FLAPKE returns.

FLAPKE: But what – but what – what do you think?

REIZSCHNEIDER: I am with you. That is, I'm convinced.

FLAPKE: Me too. Me too. I'm convinced too!

Carmen cleans the table.

REIZSCHNEIDER: You need to have conviction.

FLAPKE: You can only...only....

Takes the cup out of Carmen's hands and slams the door of the house.

CARMEN: You should keep an eye on him. He wants to do something to himself...

REIZSCHNEIDER: Everybody is the tailor of their own demise. Mr Wolkowski has not been to his room the whole night. Have you seen him?

CARMEN: No.

REIZSCHNEIDER: God, maybe he fell into the ocean?

CARMEN: Can't he swim?

REIZSCHNEIDER: He can. But he can't drink.

Enter Specht and Margit.

MARGIT: A little word. It's about the ad.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Yes?

MARGIT: Mr WOLKOWSKI and yourself are loved by the audience as a pair and...

SPECHT: So I've got this idea that...

REIZSCHNEIDER: That he takes part in it! I thought about it too!

SPECHT: Really? That's a good sign!

A dishevelled Wolkowski scrambles out of the bushes.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Speak of the devil. Good morning, Wolli.

MARGIT: Good morning.

SPECHT: Good morning.

Wolkowski looks towards them and squinting, having not answered their greeting, reverses back into the bushes.

MARGIT: It's even a condition that WOLKOWSKI stars in it. Without WOLKOWSKI there's no ad.

SPECHT: And money.

REIZSCHNEIDER: That'll make him very happy.

MARGIT: Certainly.

SPECHT and MARGIT exit, hurries over to the bushes.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wolli? Wolli? *WOLKOWSKI rears his head.* Good morning, my dear, dear chum.

WOLKOWSKI: Have you got sunstroke? Speak to me normally!

WOLKOWSKI gets up, stumbling goes up to the table, grabs a bottle of iced water, pours the contents on his head. I had a dream. A

nightmare. We were starring in that play wearing nappies. One hundred and fifty performances.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wolli, a nightmare?

WOLKOWSKI: My grandfather was a clairvoyant. I won't act in this play! Definitive no!

REIZSCHNEIDER: You have to.

WOLKOWSKI: I don't have to do anything!

REIZSCHNEIDER: They desperately want you to star in the ad.

WOLKOWSKI: Me?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Yes. They won't do it without you – and without the ad, there won't be a play! And without the play - the ad. Thirty thousand is yours.

WOLKOWSKI: Thirty? No. I'd be betraying myself.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Don't leave me out in the cold. Thirty five?

WOLKOWSKI: I won't be bought.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I need you Wolli!

WOLKOWSKI: No, I want to go home!

REIZSCHNEIDER: And what have you got to do there? Is someone waiting for you? – You see, Wolli...we both only have each other. It's been like that, it is like that and that's how it'll remain.

WOLKOWSKI: That means that I'm worse off than I thought.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Forty thousand? Wolli, you no longer have a job!

WOLKOWSKI: Fine. But believe me – I've never made a bigger sacrifice for you.

REIZSCHNEIDER: You're a real friend.

WOLKOWSKI: One more thing – know that not I'm doing this for the money.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I understand. I'll give your share to charity. So that you feel better.

WOLKOWSKI: We'll discuss that.

Enter MARGIT.

REIZSCHNEIDER: He'll do it!

MARGIT: Congratulations. Welcome to the club.

Shakes hands with Wolkowski. WOLKOWSKI enters the house.

MARGIT: Have you had a good time tonight?

REIZSCHNEIDER: I'll say. Your sister wanted to show me her favourite spot.

MARGIT: And did you find the spot?

REIZSCHNEIDER: I did in the end.

MARGIT: You're that incompetent?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Listen up – I don't want anything from your sister!

And to be honest she annoys me.

Mrs Specht enters in a bathing costume.

MRS SPECHT: *Sing song voice.* Good morning. ..

MARGIT: We were just talking about you.

MRS SPECHT: Oh, really?

MARGIT: Yes. Mr Reizschneider has confessed to me what he thinks about you.

MRS SPECHT: And?

MARGIT: He'll tell you himself in a moment.

Wants to leave.

MRS SPECHT: Ah, Margit? Is there water in the pool?

MARGIT: No. Ass's milk. Just for you.

Enters the house.

MRS SPECHT: She's jealous.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Really.

MRS SPECHT: She fancies you.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Nonsense.

MRS SPECHT: She's jealous of me.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Really? Over what?

MRS SPECHT: She doesn't want me to be happy with you.

Mr Duesseldorff waves from the balcony.

DUESSELDORF: Good morning - toodleoo! - I'll be down with you in a sec.

MRS SPECHT: I am a little angry with you.

REIZSCHNEIDER: What have I done?

MRS SPECHT: Nothing. That's just it. I lead you to my favourite spot and you fall asleep.

REIZSCHNEIDER: *Sounds relieved.* Thank God - Thank God, that I didn't misbehave, that is.

MRS SPECHT: And I wish you'd misbehave a little with me. But I know why it is. You have such a fascinating life and me? I'm second - rate.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Please! You are first - rate!

MRS SPECHT: What have I done with my life? I was a plaything of a few men. Those boring old farts made me into a boring old fart.

REIZSCHNEIDER: You're not boring at all. You're really very interesting.

MRS SPECHT: I'm vanilla.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Not true!

MRS SPECHT: Dry as a bone.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Not in my eyes.

MRS SPECHT: Embrace me close! Even though I am nobody – I'd like to be somebody for you. Can I? Am I allowed – yes, I am. Can those eyes never lie? Those eyes... look like they'd like to kiss me.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Really?

MRS SPECHT: Of course.

REIZSCHNEIDER: You learn something every day.

MRS SPECHT: Kiss me. Just a quick one. Please

He wavers.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I'm sorry. I haven't kissed anyone for a long time without a fee.

MRS SPECHT: But you'll get your fee.

Mrs DUESSELDORF exits wearing sportswear.

DUESSELDORF: Ah, what a beautiful day – after a beautiful night. For us all –I suppose...hmmm?

REIZSCHNEIDER: I have to learn my lines.

MRS SPECHT: But after...

REIZSCHNEIDER: Yes.

MRS SPECHT: But after it means before...

Reizschneider exits. DUESSELDORF does a few stretches.

MRS SPECHT: What are you doing?

DUESSELDORF: I'm going jogging. The vaginal might is rising. Last night I encountered a big, bad wolf.

MRS SPECHT: Boll?

DUESSELDORF: Since you guessed, then yes. He's crazy about me.

MRS SPECHT: You see.

DUESSELDORF: And you? Did you meet a big, bad wolf? Is it true that Reizschneider can play women like a piano?

MRS SPECHT: I wouldn't know anything about that.

DUESSELDORF: Of course you wouldn't

MRS SPECHT: I can only say that he's a virtuoso. And that's an understatement...

They both laugh, in a scheming manner. Boll exits the house.

MRS SPECHT: Oh, bad wolf... How was last night, Mr Boll?

DUESSELDORF: Hmmmmmm...

MRS SPECHT: It must have been good.

BOLL: And how was your night, Mrs Specht?

MRS SPECHT: *Slightly lower.* HmMMMMMMMM...

DUESSELDORF: It must have been heavenly...

Don't tell her anything, my love. *Kisses him.* See you later, Rüdiger.

Mrs Duesseldorff heaves her load, runs to the beach

MRS SPECHT: Until today I thought you were just a theorist – and now I hear that you quite the talented practitioner?

BOLL: All because, you went with that Reiszneider?

MRS SPECHT: Ah, I'm so happy for Lotte – you chased away her blues!

BOLL: Please – I'm crazy about you! You!

MRS SPECHT: But Lotte has money too.

BOLL: That's vicious! That's -

Specht, Reizschneider, Wolkowski and Margit exit the house.

Mrs Specht heads towards the pool. BOLL returns to the house, fuming.

SPECHT: My advertising agency has sent me a decisive yes! They've never been so enthusiastic. ..

WOLKOWSKI: And how do you envisage it?

SPECHT: Like so: You sit on a beach lounger by the sea. The wind ruffles your hair. The sound of the sea.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Very atmospheric. I'm in.

MARGIT: You're smiling and happy, light and free of problems and woes. The camera slowly pans, showing off your body. It stops at its middle.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Why? Why the middle?

MARGIT: Because that's where we so what it 's all about.

WOLKOWSKI: The nappy...?

SPECHT: That's right! But a nappy for old age. Completely new product! Do you catch on?

WOLKOWSKI's face scowls.

REIZSCHNEIDER: And you'll be able to see?

SPECHT: It's an ad for nappies – you can't not see them, right?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Well, maybe at least a towel around my waist.

SPECHT: No.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Alright then – naked? There's been many wanting to see me...

SPECHT: Not naked. In nappies.

REIZSCHNEIDER: But I think...we haven't...

SPECHT: Yes?

WOLKOWSKI: We can't -

MARGIT: Not for one hundred and fifty thousand?

REIZSCHNEIDER: We can't turn it down.

SPECHT: Not for one hundred and fifty thousand?

MARGIT: That's what you said. Tit for tat.

SPECHT: That's what I said?! That's unbelievable!

REIZSCHNEIDER: One hundred and fifty thousand?

WOLKOWSKI: Tobi!

SPECHT: One hundred and fifty thousand...Extraordinary generosity...

MARGIT: And Mr Wolkowski will feed you. The pureed food for seniors.

SPECHT: Did I really say one hundred and fifty thousand?

MARGIT: Swear on my life.

WOLKOWSKI: Tobi... my dream ...

REIZSCHNEIDER: ...He has dreamt of this for so long. I'd be really very happy if you were in...

WOLKOWSKI: Do you know what that means?

REIZSCHNEIDER: One hundred and fifty thousand.

SPECHT: Do you have any doubts, Mr Wolkowski?

WOLKOWSKI: My head hurts.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wollli, please?

WOLKOWSKI: Ah, Tobi...

REIZSCHNEIDER: We accept the challenge.

MARGIT: Wonderful!

SPECHT: One hundred and fifty thousand...*Boll, wearing swimming trunks exits the house and skulks towards the pool.*

MARGIT: And now for some test shots.

WOLKOWSKI: Now? Here? Me!

MARGIT: Yes – with my camera...

SPECHT: The marketing department needs a sample shot.

MARGIT: It's not a big deal. Right?

WOLKOWSKI: I can't now... I have a headache.

SPECHT: The marketing department is adamant.

WOLKOWSKI: *Sounds hopeful...* But the nappy brand doesn't exist yet!

SPECHT: It does. They are lying in your bedrooms.

MARGIT: Can you get changed?

Wolkowski exits.

MARGIT: And please don't forget – without your friend there is no ad –
and without the ad there is no play

SPECHT: And money.

MARGIT: See you later.

Reizschneider enters the house.

SPECHT: Jokes aside! They'll do it! They'll do it!

Now I'm going to have to film that shit and give them one hundred
and fifty euro! And I'll have to stage the other crap! How could you
promise them one hundred and fifty? I'm thick – skinned but when it
comes to finances, I buckle under the pressure.

MARGIT: Calm down. I've still got something to pull out of the bag. In
one swift move it'll solve all your problems. But there is a real chance
you could lose Lydia.

SPECHT: Why didn't you suggest it before?

MARGIT: But we wanted to have a little fun? Boll is coming. Let's go.
I'll tell you everything.

*Specht and Margit enter the house. A wet and angry Boll enters from
around the corner and stands in front of the table with the cakes.*

BOLL: I won't be treated like this!

Takes a fork. Wolkowski runs onto the balcony. Reizschneider runs after him with a bottle in hand.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Change, at once!

WOLKOWSKI: No!

REIZSCHNEIDER: We'll do it so that you'll only be seen from behind.

Nobody will recognise you!

WOLKOWSKI: I'm recognisable from behind.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Come on!

WOLKOWSKI: Everybody will recognise me from behind!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Don't be stupid!

WOLKOWSKI: I've been stopped on the street and tapped on the shoulder: Mr Wolkowski – could I get your autograph?

REIZSCHNEIDER: I've never witnessed that before.

WOLKOWSKI: There are things I do without you!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Alright, you're recognisable from behind.

WOLKOWSKI: Nobody! Nobody will offer us anything after this! This is the end of us!

REIZSCHNEIDER: If you back out it'll be the end of us!

WOLKOWSKI: Better to bow out with dignity – than like this!

REIZSCHNEIDER: O.K. You're a better person than I am. But now get into your nappy.

WOLKOWSKI: Never!

They both return to their rooms.

BOLL: Perverted.

DUESSELDORF exhausted, appears behind him.

DUESSELDORF: Rüdiger...

In one swift move, he puts the fork into his swimming trunks and winces in pain as he damages his private parts. DUESSELDORF clings to him.

DUESSELDORF: Rüdiger...I have to talk to you. What did I do wrong last night?

BOLL: No...

DUESSELDORF: In that case, why couldn't you?

BOLL: Leave me alone – please?!

Drapes herself on him.

DUESSELDORF: What did I do wrong? Please, tell me?

Mrs Specht enters from around the corner.

MRS SPECHT: What passion!

MRS Specht enters the house. BOLL pushes away DUESSELDORF.

BOLL: Leave me alone!

DUESSELDORF: Rüdiger...?

BOLL: It's a misunderstanding!

DUESSELDORF: That you took me to the beach? That was the misunderstanding?

BOLL: I don't want anything from you!

DUESSELDORF: What did I do wrong? Tell me! What did I do wrong?!

BOLL: Don't touch me. I'll go crazy in a minute.

Shakes her off and runs into the house.

DUESSELDORF: Why are you doing this to me...?

WOLKOWSKI enters the garden wearing the nappies with trepidation.

He takes one step slowly after the other until he stops in front of DUESSELDORF who is lying on the ground. WOLKOWSKI jumps into the bushes. REIZSCHNEIDER – also wearing nappies is struggling to enter the garden.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Everything all right?

DUESSELDORF: Everything – as always!

Crying, she enters the house.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Ingo? Where are you? Ingo? *Wolkowski rears his head out of the bushes.* Get out of there!

WOLKOWSKI: *Leans out carefully...* They'll be here in a minute and gape at us.

REIZSCHNEIDER: That's a requisite of our line of work.

WOLKOWSKI: You've played: Hamlet, Richard III, Tasso, The Merchant of Venice, Galileo...and now you stand before me wearing nappies.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Stop it!

WOLKOWSKI: It's admitting you're financially ruined!

REIZSCHNEIDER: I am financially ruined!

WOLKOWSKI: But you're not morally ruined!

MARGIT and Specht appear on the terrace...

SPECHT: Nobody will believe it. I'm too good at business.

MARGIT: That's why we'll fiddle with the facts... The debt collector will arrive. I'm sure Wolkowski will help us. Ah, Mr Reizschneider, does it chaff?

REIZSCHNEIDER: No. It fits like a glove!

Margit takes her chair down to the beach.

MARGIT: So let's get to it. We'll film here on the lounge. Please lie down...like that...relax...hmmm? Mr Wolkowski, you'll enter from behind carrying a golden tray with the pureed food „SENIORMAC“ – you'll serve the food, open the jar and feed your friend. Then Mr Reizschneider looks at you full of gratitude and you grab each other's hands – you look ahead into the camera and Mr Wolkowski says: „PROSENIOR NAPPIES - whatever your age may be, everyday you'll feel comfy"! And then Reizschneider says: „SENIORMAC for women and men will make you feel like a child again"

WOLKOWSKI: It rhymes?

SPECHT: I made that up. Cool, no?

MARGIT: And at the end you say in unison: „ The food you eat so tasty this mash, will be caught the other end just in a flash"

Pause

SPECHT: So, what do you think?

REIZSCHNEIDER: We're up for the challenge.

MARGIT: Great – so say the lines back to me.

WOLKOWSKI: *Apathetically* PROSENIOR NAPPIES - whatever your age may be, everyday you'll feel comfy"

REIZSCHNEIDER: „SENIORMAC for women and men will make you feel like a child again“

IN UNISON: „ The food you eat so tasty this mash, will be caught the other end just in a flash“.

MARGIT: Do you think you'll remember it.

WOLKOWSKI: We'll never forget.

Wolkowski starts laughing hysterically.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Shut it! *Wolkowski stops...* Sorry,

Wolli.

MARGIT: Let's get down to business. Mr Wolkowski please take up your position.

Wolkowski doesn't move. Mindlessly picks away at a flower.

MARGIT: Don't you feel well?

Reizschneider goes up to him and leads him into position. He lies on the lounge...

MARGIT: Camera action! Mr Wolkowski – go on!

Wolkowski walks towards the lounge carrying the tray – Carmen enters the terrace also carrying a tray – she looks at Wolkowski open – mouthed. He dives in the bushes.

SPECHT: Ah, Carmen? You're a little surprised, aren't you? It's a test shoot. Thank you. Could you leave please?

Carmen backs away.

MARGIT: Mr Wolkowski? Please come out.

pause

SPECHT: Well, that's that then. The whole project won't go ahead.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wait! Please wait a moment.

SPECHT: But your friend doesn't want to!

REIZSCHNEIDER: He does! Of course he does! *Commanding tone.*

Get out of there! Right now!

Wolkowski comes out obediently.

WOLKOWSKI: We'll never live this down....never...

REIZSCHNEIDER: Take up positions! Now! Here!

Wolkowski obediently obeys.

MARGIT: Camera action. Go on.

Wolkowski carries the tray. Behind him MRS SPECHT appears. She's dumbfounded. Right behind her BOLL and FLAPKE.

WOLKOWSKI opens the jar and, with shaking hands, feeds Reizschneider. They then look at the camera.

WOLKOWSKI: " PROSENIOR NAPPIES - whatever your age may be, everyday you'll feel comfy."

REIZSCHNEIDER: „SENIORMAC for women and men will make you feel like a child again."

IN UNISON: „ The food you eat so tasty this mash, will be caught the other end just in a flash"

Silence. Reizschneider and Wolkowski stand holding hands.

SPECHT: My new ad. What do you think of it?

MRS SPECHT: No...

FLAPKE: It's – it's the most extreme, shocking and disgusting thing I've ever seen in my life.

MRS SPECHT: Awful!

BOLL: Don Juan in nappies!

SPECHT: Kids, I'm happy. It's going to be a big success!

Carmen leans out of the balcony...

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard!?

CARMEN: Sir, the phone!

Specht hurries into the house.

BOLL: *Explodes into laughter and astonished.* It's the role of a lifetime, Mr Reizschneider.... „ The food you eat so tasty this mash...

FLAPKE: ... „ will be caught the other end just in a flash“

BOLL: The mighty actor has really shown us what he's capable of!

Wolkowski runs away.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wollli?!

MRS SPECHT: Mr Reizschneider...

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wollli, I'm so sorry!

BOLL: See, Lydia – that man has real class.

MARGIT: He's in the encyclopaedia.

MRS SPECHT: You beast!

MARGIT: Why? He's getting paid for it.

SPECHT exits the house, he stumbles theatrically and whimpers whilst holing on the gate.

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard? *Gerhard whines...*What happened? Say something.

SPECHT: I've got nothing left to say.

MRS SPECHT: What's wrong with you?

SPECHT: Nothing...I've got nothing...I'm bankrupt!

ACT V

A while later. MRS DUESSELDORF sits on the terrace engrossed in eating a sausage, next to her are two, large suitcases... MRS SPECHT is sitting in a deck chair looking miserable.

MRS SPECHT: We're ruined...

DUESSELDORF: There is no God. Maybe it won't be so bad?

MRS SPECHT: He fired Carmen. We can't pay her. I don't know if I can stay with him...

DUESSELDORF: You want to...? In this situation?

MRS SPECHT: To go bankrupt – you just don't do it!

DUESSELDORF: Did you save a bit? For yourself?

Mrs Specht shakes her head, crying. It's terrible.

MRS SPECHT: That's what happens when you trust someone!

DUESSELDORF: Calm down. You can live with me for a bit.

MRS SPECHT: Thank you! Thank you!

DUESSELDORF: That's what friends are for!

Boll exits onto the terrace carrying a suitcase. MRS SPECHT runs into the house, crying.

BOLL: Lotte?

DUESSELDORF: Leave me be.

BOLL: We need to talk.

DUESSELDORF: We don't.

Wants to leave.

BOLL: Please, listen to me.

DUESSELDORF: Fine. Eat and talk. I'll listen to you as long it takes you to finish that sausage.

He takes the sausage and speaks whilst eating it, grimacing in disgust.

BOLL: I was so harsh with you because -

DUESSELDORF: Bite off another piece.

BOLL: Because I was -

DUESSELDORF: Chew.

BOLL: Cornered. By - no matter. By someone or other.

DUESSELDORF: Swallow.

BOLL: In any case, this someone couldn't stand the fact that I like you... this person gave me a small loan...

DUESSELDORF: And this person was blackmailing you...?

BOLL: I'm ashamed.

Spits a piece out.

DUESSELDORF: I can't believe it...

BOLL: Perhaps it's better you don't believe it. I have no intention of ruining your friendship...

DUESSELDORF: The snake... Just you wait!

BOLL: But please, no scandals. Promise me you won't say anything. I only told you because I don't want you to think ill of me when we part.
Adieu!

Picks up his suitcase.

DUESSELDORF: What are you going to do now?

BOLL: To go back into the jaws of newspaper writing. Take care.

DUESSELDORF: And your book?

BOLL: I have to let that one go. All the best.

DUESSELDORF: Rüdiger? I have holiday home in Spain.

BOLL: That's cool.

DUESSELDORF: Maybe it'd be cool for you as well. I thought...

BOLL: You mean to say that I could – there?

DUESSELDORF: Yes. You'd have peace and quiet.

BOLL: Peace, peace! Some peace, finally! Lotte – it's a...

- and in the evenings, I could work as a waiter!

DUESSELDORF: That won't be necessary.

BOLL: Lotte – I'm dumbstruck. You're kind. You're amazing. But I don't know...if I can?

DUESSELDORF: You must! Think about your book!

BOLL: Fine. But only if you visit me from time to time.

DUESSELDORF: I'll be by your side...

BOLL: Oh! So you'll be there too?

DUESSELDORF: Of course.

BOLL: The whole time?

DUESSELDORF: That's obvious.

BOLL: So – so I don't need anything else to be happy! *Enter Reizschneider, behind him Margit. Ah, Mr Nappy man!*

REIZSCHNEIDER: Get out of my way – you fly on my shit.

Takes his suitcase and goes down towards the beach.

BOLL: You're finished.

REIZSCHNEIDER! Finished!

DUESSELDORF: Rüdiger?

Specht goes out on the terrace, behind him is his wife with the suitcase.

MRS SPECHT: To bet our whole fortune? How can you be that stupid?

SPECHT: I wanted to put off the announcement of my bankruptcy. I thought you'd leave me if I lost the firm?

MRS SPECHT: How could you do such a thing to me?

SPECHT: Love makes you blind...

MRS SPECHT: I'm dying...

SPECHT: *Leaps up.* No! I'm the one dying! I'll drive into a tree!

Boll stops him.

BOLL: Don't do anything stupid. It's only money!

SPECHT: Only money? I was liked because I had money!

BOLL: That's not true! Your wife loves you without the money. Right, Lydia? *Mrs Specht only whimpers.* In any case, there will always be people who will help you!

SPECHT: Do you think so?

BOLL: I'm certain of it.

SPECHT: Could you lend me a little money?

MRS SPECHT: Oh, God...

BOLL: At this time I won't be able to come through...

SPECHT: Thank you. I can sense your good will. I'll call on you again...

Specht throws himself onto the swing. Flapke rushes onto the terrace.

MRS SPECHT: To Margit. You're still here?

MARGIT: I'm waiting for a taxi.

Flapke rushes up to Mrs Specht.

FLAPKE: The situation has changed – but could you...? I was thinking – the Kamerlany theatre is waiting....

MRS SPECHT: Excuse me? I have other worries! Real worries! Ruined! That's life. And not that drivel!

FLAPKE: Drivel... Is that what you think? Is that what you think too – Mr Boll?

BOLL: Well ... you're more of a classical artist as opposed to the romantic type; the classical type reaches the pinnacle of their creative feats very late and you should -

FLAPKE: Stop talking crap!

BOLL: No?

FLAPKE: So?

BOLL: So – I suggest you take a long break from writing.

FLAPKE: Aha –Is that the general consensus?

Pause So, what did you exactly need me for?

Flapke falls onto the grass...

MARGIT: *To her sister.* Champagne?

MRS SPECHT: Give me a break.

SPECHT: I'll happily have a glass. Who knows when I'll have champagne next?

BOLL: What a tragedy...

MARGIT: No. A comedy. Him – bankrupt! He's only pretending.

SPECHT: Margit, enough of the jokes. Why would I lie?

MARGIT: It's clear as day. Aren't you catching on? Dear uncle here doesn't want to throw money at Flapke's crap.

Flapke, falls on his back, closes his eyes.

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard, is that true?

SPECHT: Lydia, are you with me?

MRS SPECHT: Margit is right? You made it all up?

SPECHT: So are you on my side?

MRS SPECHT: And where am I supposed to be?!

SPECHT: That's the biggest happiness a person could have.

MRS SPECHT: Everything was fabricated?

BOLL: Sly, old fox...I don't know what to say?

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard!? To give me such a fright! That's horrible! I nearly had a heart attack! You cunning old weasel!

SPECHT: Lidia, I'm sorry - but...

MRS SPECHT: You don't have to be sorry! You did good! That crap would have compromised us! Carmen?!

Flapke in one swift move gets up and, with a firm step, goes indoors passing Carmen who has just appeared on the terrace.

MRS SPECHT: We need to celebrate! Champagne! For everyone! – Come on, move it!

CARMEN: I've been fired.

MRS SPECHT: You're hired again. We haven't gone bankrupt. My husband pulled a fast one on us. *Carmen enters the house* – God, and I believed it.

Wolkowski dressed as an old man, appears from the side.

WOLKOWSKI: *Mutters, lowered gaze.*

Good morning. Am I in Mr Specht's estate?

SPECHT: Yes this was the Specht residence.

MRS SPECHT: It was?

WOLKOWSKI: My surname is Schleuder. Hubert Schleuder.

From the liquidation department... I've received a list of all your liquid and private assets.

MRS SPECHT: We won't sell anything.

WOLKOWSKI: Here is the decree from the debt collector, Mr Plattmann.

Wolkowski shoves a piece of paper under Specht's nose.

SPECHT: That's correct.

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard...? So you've really gone bankrupt?

SPECHT: I never said it was otherwise.

Wolkowski starts sticking red stickers onto surrounding objects.

MRS SPECHT: What are you doing?

DEBT COLLECTOR: I'm marking all of the objects designated for auction. Please get out of my way.

MRS SPECHT: Insolent man! We have guests!

DEBT COLLECTOR: Dear woman, I am usually the height of respect. But because your husband didn't reply to neither our written correspondence nor our phone calls, I am forced to undertake drastic actions.

Mrs Specht wants to enter the house.

No, please don't go inside. Refrain from entering the house until I mark everything up and cross everything off my list.

Carmen enters holding the champagne, gives everyone a glass, pours.

Specht pretends to fight back tears.

WOLKOWSKI: The necklace, please...

MRS SPECHT: No. - Gerhard?

WOLKOWSKI: The necklace.

MRS SPECHT: Do something!

SPECHT: Do as Mr Schleuder says.

WOLKOWSKI: I only want to value it.

MRS SPECHT: But it's mine! We've got our own assets.

WOLKOWSKI: If that's true, it'll be crossed off the list. So? *Gives him the necklace, he puts a red sticker on it.* The rings too. *Takes off the rings. He places a sticker on it.* You can keep the wedding ring...it's not worth anything! – Can you show me your shoes?

MRS SPECHT: My shoes? They're new!

WOLKOWSKI: Exactly. Italian. Take them off.

MRS SPECHT: Are you mad?

MARGIT: You are going to far...

DEBT COLLECTOR: Duty sometimes tastes like madness. The shoes.

SPECHT: Please. Here are mine. *Takes off his shoes.* And my wallet, the front door keys, the key to the safe – and also the keys to the Jaguar. Here you go.

MRS SPECHT: I can't get my head round this. *Wolkowski jots everything down, sticks a sticker onto Mrs Specht's shoes. Carmen pours Mrs Specht some champagne.* Are you insane?

CARMEN: But -

MRS SPECHT: You're fired.

CARMEN: So – for sure? Yes?

MRS SPECHT: Once and for all!

Carmen takes the glass from her hand, sits down and drinks...

WOLKOWSKI: I'll go and mark everything inside.

SPECHT: Oh, in the bedroom under the carpet is five thousand Euros. My golden reserve. Lucky I remembered.

WOLKOWSKI: A model client – I wish I had more like you.

Wolkowski enters the house.

SPECHT: I suddenly feel light. *Swings.* Light, light as a feather...

MRS SPECHT: He's lost his mind!

SPECHT: But instead, I found love! Until today, I thought that it was my money that joined us – but now I know that it's love. Because you're with me even now – when I'm just a poor man.

MARGIT: Now you'll have to work hard.

MRS SPECHT: Maybe as a cleaner – right?

SPECHT: Darling, you'd do that for me?

DUESSELDORF: Yes, darling, would you do that for him?

SPECHT: Hard work. That's how it is. And in ten years time we'll be on the up again!

MRS SPECHT: I'll be fifty-six by then.

SPECHT: And I'll only be seventy-four!

MRS SPECHT: God – the forks! *Throws herself at the table.* The forks!

He didn't see them. *Loads them into her blouse.* One – two – three-four-five – six? Only six? Six? *Crawls around the table on all fours.*

There are forks missing. Only six! There were ten! Where can they have got to? Oh! I know who has them. I know!

Goes up to Carmen who is sitting behind Boll

BOLL: No brash suspicions!

MRS SPECHT: As I suspected.

BOLL: Suspicions – it's only suspicions.

MRS SPECHT: Carmen!? Give me the forks!

BOLL: Ah, Carmen? You think that – Carmen has....

CARMEN: This has gone too far.

SPECHT: Darling, give it a rest.

MRS SPECHT: A rest? You're calmly looking on as they are robbing us.

CARMEN: But I haven't!

MRS SPECHT: *Attacks Carmen.* The forks? Where are my forks?

Wolkowski returns.

WOLKOWSKI: What's going on here?

CARMEN: I've been wrongly accused...

MRS SPECHT: Carmen! Silence.

WOLKOWSKI: What is she to be silent about? *Silence.* I'll find out anyway.

Wolkowski stands in front of the table with the cakes.

Cake.... you need forks to eat cake...For this number of people you'd need about ten. Given that this once was a rich household, I expect they were gold forks. And not just any old forks, antique ones. Matching the decor of the house - Biedermeier. There are ten Biedermeier gold forks missing here.

SPECHT: A professional.

WOLKOWSKI: Where are they? – Give them here!

Mrs Specht takes the forks from out of her bra.

WOLKOWSKI: There's only six. Where is the rest?

MRS SPECHT: I don't know.

WOLKOWSKI: Clothes off.

BOLL: You're really going too far.

WOLKOWSKI: Going too far? You don't know how far I can go! If I wish it so, everyone here will take off his or her clothes.

BOLL: Don't get on your high horse.

MARGIT: I think your job here is done now.

WOLKOWSKI: Oh, really! In that case... have I really finished?

Car horn.

BOLL: Ah, the taxi. Come on Lotte.

DUESSELDORF, Mrs Specht and Boll pick up their suitcases.

SPECHT: Lydia? You want to leave?

MRS SPECHT: I need to be alone.

SPECHT: You want a divorce now?

MRS SPECHT: I'll think about it.

SPECHT: So you want a divorce?

MRS SPECHT: Please, leave me alone. Let's go.

DUESSELDORF: Lydia, I don't have a spare room anymore.

MRS SPECHT: What...?

DUESSELDORF: Find yourself another victim.

MRS SPECHT: Lotte? Why?

DUESSELDORF: You think I want a snake by my side?

MRS SPECHT: Ah... Hold on a moment! I don't know what that slime ball has been telling you – but he's lying!

DUESSELDORF: No. You're lying. First, you tried to pick him up. But then he wanted me! You couldn't bear it – so you blackmailed him! God, you're just a common slut!

MRS SPECHT: He was the one trying to seduce me!

BOLL: It's so pathetic.

SPECHT: So you slept with him. With that?

MRS SPECHT: He wanted to – but couldn't!

BOLL: I never wanted anything from her.

MRS SPECHT: And most of all you wanted my money! And now the rat deserts the sinking ship! Go on then Mr Boll, jump straight onto that lump of lard!

DUESSELDORF: You... bitch!

Throws herself onto Mrs Specht.

BOLL: Lotte? - Lydia!?

Boll tries to break them apart, but is caught in the blows. In the end, both of the women, dishevelled, sit sobbing on the grass. Wolkowski checks the weight of Boll's suitcase.

SPECHT: It's good that no one can see us like this – I might be old but I don't understand this life.

BOLL: Come on, Lotte. We don't belong here anymore. Adieu, Mr nappy man. And send my regards to your pal who's just as much of a ham as you are. *To Wolkowski.* Please give me my suitcase.

WOLKOWSKI: Ham? Am I hearing bad words against Mr Wolkowski?

BOLL: You know him?

WOLKOWSKI: Who doesn't know him?! In addition, I'll tell you:

Wolkowski is a fine actor!

BOLL: My suitcase! Please!

WOLKOWSKI: The forks are inside.

BOLL: Have you lost your mind?

WOLKOWSKI: I am completely certain they are inside. Please open the suitcase.

BOLL: I won't do it!

DUESSELDORF: May I? You have something to hide?

BOLL: Of course not.

DUESSELDORF: So let him look if he wants to so much. *Snatches the suitcase from Wolkowski and opens it.* You see, there are only....four gold forks ... Rüdiger...?

BOLL: It was self – defence...pure self – defence.

MRS SPECHT: See Lotte, he needs you. He can't live without you. But watch your cutlery!

DUESSELDORF: *To Boll.* You poor, old coot.

BOLL: Lotte, it's–

DUESSELDORF: *With fork in hand.* Piss off before I stab you.

BOLL: What are four forks compared to one book?!

Runs away.

DUESSELDORF: *Inspects her dress.* I need to change.

Takes her suitcase and enters the house. Mrs Specht gets up off the grass and snatches the suitcase.

SPECHT: All the best. I always missed you.

MRS SPECHT: And when I was here?

SPECHT: I didn't miss you.

MRS SPECHT: Mr Reizschneider, I'm sorry. I'm sorry for your friend too.

REIZSCHNEIDER: It's the only person here I feel sorry for. I betrayed him. What will he do now?

MRS SPECHT: Please don't be hard on yourself. You carried him for too long.

WOLKOWSKI: How dare you?

MRS SPECHT: Why are you getting involved? Wolkowski is a terrible actor.

WOLKOWSKI: Such impertinence.

MRS SPECHT: He just pulls faces. *To Specht.* We'll talk on the phone.

WOLKOWSKI: *Shouts to Reizschneider.* Why aren't you sticking up for your friend?

REIZSCHNEIDER: Give me a break.

WOLKOWSKI: Do you have the same opinion of your friend? Answer me?

REIZSCHNEIDER: I don't speak ill of my friends.

WOLKOWSKI: Coward! I know what you think! You think: even though he's a terrible actor, I still like him –

REIZSCHNEIDER: I don't just like him – I love him!

WOLKOWSKI: Even though he just pulls, horrible faces?

REIZSCHNEIDER: That's none of your business.

WOLKOWSKI: It is my business! *Wolkowski takes off his costume.*

Now at least I know what you think of me.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wollli...? You...?

WOLKOWSKI: Judas!

Wolkowski enters the house.

REIZSCHNEIDER: That's all we needed.

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard? What's the meaning of this?

SPECHT: Just a little stunt Margit and I conjured up. Mr Wolkowski was so nice and helped us to get rid of your friends. You know – I desperately needed a holiday!

MRS SPECHT: So you're not bankrupt?

SPECHT: But the quarterly figures really are awful.

REIZSCHNEIDER: And the ad for the nappies?

SPECHT: Was never going to be filmed.

MRS SPECHT: So it's all been made up... *Sits, shaken up, staring ahead.* Gerhard, I can now be angry with you.

SPECHT: There's no need.

MRS SPECHT: Gerhard... I -

SPECHT: All right then. I've forgiven you.

MRS SPECHT: I've forgiven you too.

SPECHT: How beautiful.

MRS SPECHT: That means that everything's all right then, yes?

SPECHT: Everything's all right. It enriches a man to be poor for only a moment.

MRS SPECHT: My darling, my darling husband!

Car horn.

SPECHT: Darling, your cab.

MRS SPECHT: What for?

SPECHT: You wanted to leave?

MRS SPECHT: What?

SPECHT: You wanted to leave me?

MRS SPECHT: A knee – jerk reaction. It was all too much for me to get my head around.

SPECHT: So you want to stay.

MRS SPECHT: Yes.

SPECHT: Because you love me.

MRS SPECHT: Yes.

SPECHT: No. You don't have to pretend you're somebody you're not. I don't want to burden you any longer.

MRS SPECHT: But -

SPECHT: No lies -

MRS SPECHT: Gerard-

SPECHT: You have to leave. At once.

MRS SPECHT: What will I do?

SPECHT: Oh yes, our marriage contract. That's your problem. We'll talk it through. In a year, or two. On the phone.

MRS SPECHT: What shall I do now?!

MARGIT: Hitch up your skirt in front of ours – until they still fancy taking a peek.

MRS SPECHT: Why do you hate me so much?

MARGIT: You're the same as your mother. You pounced on us like locusts– and when there was nothing left to devour, you moved on elsewhere.

MRS SPECHT: You father was a loser.

MARGIT: A trusting dreamer with a big heart. He was too soft on you.

MRS SPECHT: He who dreams is bound to lose.

MARGIT: Yes, that's true.

Mrs Specht stuffs the forks into her suitcase and leaves. Wolkowski exits the house with his suitcase.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wollli! Wollli – please! How you played that debt collector – it was top notch! You're a brilliant actor!

WOLKOWSKI: No, I'm not.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wollli, of course you are –

WOLKOWSKI: Don't lie. And I have to stop fooling myself. We won't see each other again. Goodbye.

REIZSCHNEIDER: Wollli? Us two – we're a team!?

WOLKOWSKI: A team? Nobody calls us anymore, anyway.

Wolkowski leaves. Flapke, wet, runs out of the house. Carmen and Duesseldorff chase after him. Mrs DUESSELDORF hits Flapke.

FLAPKE: Leave me alone!

DUESSELDORF: Oh, no! You don't commit suicide over such a silly thing. Others have it worse and go on living.

FLAPKE: You're completely bonkers. Let me go!

Flapke frees himself and runs towards the sea.

DUESSELDORF: Just you wait you silly little boy. I'll show you!!

Runs after him. .

CARMEN: We found him in the bath with a sock in his mouth.

SPECHT: I'll hope she'll spare his life – Carmen, will you marry me?

CARMEN: I've been fired.

SPECHT: Consider yourself hired again. Come on, help me pack my bags.

Specht and Carmen enter the house.

MARGIT: Will you have a drink?

REIZSCHNEIDER: No. I don't feel well. Your stench of arrogance and self - appreciation is unbearable...it's all your doing. You think you're better than everyone else here. My God, how you puffed your chest in pride in that company. Like the goddess sent down to live on earth with vile humankind as punishment. I'll give you a piece of advice: you should be alone. You should avoid people and revel in your own self.

MARGIT: We really did meet. Hamlet. That time in Hamburg. I was the director's assistant.

REIZSCHNEIDER: I don't – don't recall.

MARGIT: You paid no attention to me. I was the small, blonde director's assistant who jotted notes the whole time. I wrote down everything you said. And every night, every damn night, read them over and over again. I believed in you. I adored you.

REIZSCHNEIDER: And I betrayed you. I betrayed you, Wolli, myself and all those around me. I'll stop acting... *Grabs a bottle and goes up to her.* Will you take me with you? I'm finished...

MARGIT: It's a new beginning.

Takes the bottle from out of his hand and strokes his face. He leans his head on her shoulder...

REIZSCHNEIDER: Please...we'll leave together? Yes?

Wolkowski returns.

WOLKOWSKI: Some producers have called. They want you and me. They want us both!

REIZSCHNEIDER: Well...

END

