

RADIO SLOVENIJA
Radio Drama Department

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SOMEONE SHOULD WALK THE DOG

A radio drama by

Tomislav Zajec

Adapted by Vilma Štritof

(Slovenian translation by Alenka Klabus Vesel)

Cast:

Man, 36 SEBASTIAN CAVAZZA

Father, 78 BORIS CAVAZZA

Woman, 35 MAŠA DERGANČ

Voice MIHA ZOR

Sound: SONJA STRENAR

Sound effects artists: MATJAŽ MIKLIČ, URBAN GRUDEN, TRISTAN PELOZ

Music design: DARJA HLAVKA GODINA

Adaptation and dramaturgy: VILMA ŠTRITOF

Sound script: ŠPELA KRAVOGEL

Directed by ŠPELA KRAVOGEL

Produced by ŠPELA KRAVOGEL

Recorded in the studios of Radio Slovenija in March 2019.

Running time: 47' 20''

Original broadcast date: 9th September 2019

Synopsis

This is an intimate drama about a dying man, his former girlfriend and his father. A single day of the man's life is presented to us, in a non-dramatic, initially retrograde mode. There are very few things these characters can say to one another; the man can only make some confessions and clear up some facts before his death. There is little turmoil on the outside; the deeply human core of the text lies in its pauses, its reflections and delays. The words can only frame that which is essential. The question of what to do when time has almost run out opens up widely, and so does the realisation that what matters cannot be spoken.

The drama, winner of the Marin Držić Award, was originally written for the theatre. It was performed with great success in Croatia and abroad, and later made into a film. In 2018, it received the award for foreign drama at *Les Journées de Lyon des auteurs de théâtre*, the most notable contest for playwrights in the French-speaking world.

Radio drama was shortlisted on festival Prix Italia 2019 in the category of Radio drama.

1.

MAN: Let's begin with him. For no reason. Maybe because he's not alive anymore. Or maybe, because on that morning, he took his dog and went for a long walk around the city. His leg hurt, but so what, he had to take the dog for a walk. This Man worked in a library. In primary school. This Man only had one story to tell, the same story, to anyone who might ask him anything. The story of an afternoon in town, less than two months before he would be dead. So, we've begun with this Man in the rain under an overhanging roof, and this Man is just as much here, as he is not here anymore.

SFX: Rain in city, under overhanging roof. Rain. Cars.

WOMAN: Oh, fuck.

MAN, WOMAN *laugh*.

WOMAN: Do you have a light?

MAN: Yes.

SFX: Lighting up cigarette. Smoking.

WOMAN: Oh, so...

MAN (*simultaneously*): I...

WOMAN: No, you go.

MAN: Oh, okay... Hi!

WOMAN: I'm not sure I feel like talking to you.

WOMAN: What?

MAN: What do you mean, what?

WOMAN: I'm on a break.

MAN: Oh.

WOMAN: And just like that, who shows up?

MAN: Yes.

WOMAN: Oh, bummer. *Laughs.*

SFX: City train.

WOMAN: God, sorry...I'm sorry, really... You look well.

MAN: So do you.

WOMAN: Oh... Well, it went out.

MAN: Here.

SFX: Lighting up cigarette.

WOMAN: I shouldn't really, but they say you shouldn't go cold turkey.

MAN: You're trying to quit?

WOMAN: Trying to, yeah...

MAN: Mhm.

WOMAN: I work over there. Just started.

MAN: Really?

WOMAN: Well, more like three months ago.

MAN: A new branch?

WOMAN: It's a ticket sales agency. Airline tickets. I sell them, and others get to fly, far and wide. You've lost weight. Well, you haven't changed much.

MAN: You haven't changed either.

WOMAN: Oh, what do you know.

MAN: I don't.

WOMAN: I used to cry a lot, but now I don't have time anymore. (*Laughs.*)
Okay, for your information, this sounded better before it came out of my mouth.
I have to go.

MAN: Hm...

WOMAN: Oh, bummer. What?

MAN: Nothing, it's nothing—

WOMAN: Oh, bummer.

MAN: You didn't use to say that—

WOMAN: What, fuck?

MAN: No, "oh, bummer."

WOMAN: Oh, that. No, seriously, what are you doing here?

MUSIC

MAN: I have to buy a tie.

MUSIC

VOICE: Radio drama: Someone Should Walk the Dog

MUSIC

2.

SFX: MAN climbing stairs in apartment building.

VOICE: It is now 2:45 PM.

MUSIC

MAN: While the Man stood in front of his Father's apartment, an hour and a half before this encounter, he was thinking about the Woman you've just met. He remembered how sad she had been, when in one early spring, an unfortunate sparrow had slammed into the glass balcony door of their fifth-floor apartment. The Woman then took this bird, this sparrow, and put it into a shoe box, and he took it out, tied some nylon string to its wings and hung it from a tree to look like it was flying. So, the Man was surprised to see her crying over a bird that was dead, and then suddenly wasn't anymore. But it could be that this Man never understood this Woman.

SFX: Shaking umbrella. Knock on door. Clothes rustling.

MAN: It's me.

FATHER (*from the other side of the door*): Who is it?

MAN: Come on, Dad. Just open the door.

SFX: FATHER opens door.

FATHER: What are you doing here?

MAN: You know what day it is.

FATHER: This cow, the community nurse, hasn't bothered to show up! She called in with some flu, bronchitis, cough.

MAN: She's sick.

MAN: Not as sick as me! And when she does come, she just sits with a dumb look on her face. "Sir, do you ever think of death?" As if I have a choice. Death is thinking of me, so why give it the advantage?

MAN: She's asking you that?

FATHER: Incredibly professional, right? And she has the cheek to tell me: “You, who are a poet.” Well, you are a cow. And a sadist.

MAN: May I come in?

FATHER: You are too early. Wait!

MAN: What?

FATHER: Will you just wait? Wait here. Come on. Step on this.

SFX: MAN wiping shoes on cloth. Enters.

MAN: Maybe we should open the window.

SFX: Footsteps.

FATHER: You’re dripping rain all over the books and... and all over.

SFX: MAN opens window. Rain. Cars.

MAN: How do you even find your way around with all this stuff?

FATHER: How? I find my way around. Wipe your feet here, will you?

SFX: MAN wiping shoes on cloth. Newspaper falls on coffee table.

MAN: Yeah, yeah. I’ve brought you the newspaper.

FATHER: You’re too early... I still have to polish my shoes, for tonight.

MAN: There’s plenty of time.

FATHER: So, you’ve changed your mind? And you’ve come to tell me.

MAN: I haven’t changed my mind.

FATHER: You haven't, have you? Where's your dog?

SFX: Needle of record player making scratching sounds.

MAN: At home.

FATHER: You've left it at home, your dog. I don't like dogs.

MAN: I know, Dad.

FATHER: I bet *she* doesn't like that dog of yours either. Have you taken it for a walk?

MAN: I have, Dad.

FATHER: Tell me something better.

MAN: I don't know... You've got quite a mess here.

FATHER: That's your opinion.

MAN: Fine, you don't. Then it's something else.

FATHER: Oh, well...

FATHER: Hegel stopped by. It's his fault.

MAN: Oh, really? Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel?

FATHER: That's the guy. He stopped by and then out of the blue, he exploded. He was sitting on the sofa and he exploded. But that's not chaos.

MAN: Hm. Wait, what about...

FATHER: The water heater is out of order.

MAN: Do you want me to take a look?

FATHER: Look who's talking.

3.

SFX: Rain, under overhanging roof in city. Traffic.

VOICE: It is now 4:58 PM.

WOMAN: I'm tired, it's been a long day. All these people buying tickets like crazy and flying everywhere... Oh, I don't know.

MAN: Where are they flying?

MUSIC

SFX: MAN fiddling with keys.

WOMAN: I really have to go now.

MAN: Wait –

WOMAN: Oh, bummer.

MAN: Yes, bummer, I know. But it's nice to see you, is all I'm saying.

WOMAN: Oh... Look... I'm not on my own anymore. I mean, I'm with someone.

MAN: Okay.

MUSIC

WOMAN: Do you have anyone?

SFX: Train.

MAN: The dog. I have the dog.

WOMAN: Ah. Uh-huh. Mhm.

MAN: That's how life goes.

MUSIC

WOMAN: I prefer birds.

MAN: I know, I remember.

WOMAN: I should've left you, not the other way around.

MAN: What, because of that sparrow?

WOMAN *laughs*.

WOMAN: And so, now you want us to go get a tie? After four months, just like this? To get a tie? Why?

MUSIC

MAN: I don't wear them, but he wants to – I don't actually know what he wants. You know what he's like.

WOMAN: Mhm.

MAN: Hm. Come on...

SFX: MAN fiddling with keys. Rain and traffic in city.

4.

SFX: MAN fixing gas water heater in bathroom.

VOICE: It is now 3:06 PM

FATHER (*from the room*): Are you done?

MAN: Wait.

FATHER (*from the room*): You're mumbling.

MAN: Wait a minute... Make yourself busy.

FATHER (*from the room*): I'm waiting... Reading the newspaper. The weather forecast says rain.

MAN: It's the dust, it has totally clogged up the heater.

FATHER (*from the room*): Oh, I don't know. You know, some people will deliberately break the heater so that it starts leaking. After a while, of course. In the middle of the night. So that when they go to sleep, they will eventually...

SFX: MAN washing hands.

MAN: What did you say?

FATHER (*from the room*): Are you hard of hearing?

MAN: Oh... It's the water, I couldn't...

SFX: MAN – footsteps. FATHER browsing newspaper in room.

FATHER: Maybe no one will show up for this award ceremony. Maybe others are reading the newspaper, too. Scanning the obituaries... Passed away...
“‘cause if he died, then we don't have to go.”

SFX: MAN – footsteps. Clothes rustling.

FATHER: What else do you do, besides school?

MAN: Besides school?

FATHER: Yes, after work. Usually. You do walk the dog at least?

SFX: Needle of record player making scratching sounds.

MAN: Yes, that. I walk the dog.

FATHER: And so does she. Does she go with you? She must be upset with me; she never comes around.

MAN: She's busy, she's working.

FATHER: Yeah, yeah... Everybody's busy, everybody's working... They've asked me to translate a book. Not because it's me, but because others are busy, others are working. That's what they said. I told them I didn't even read anymore. Just the weather forecast.

MAN: Dad...

FATHER: Hegel and I exploded in my room, that's what I said.

MAN: Ah, Hegel. Yes.

SFX: MAN – footsteps. Clothes rustling. Water being poured into glass.

FATHER: What time is it?

MAN: It's three o'clock. Three and a bit.

FATHER: Bring me the pills, will you? It's past three already...

MAN: Where are they, Dad?

FATHER: In the room, in the cupboard. The grey ones. The merry colour of hypertension.

SFX: Man – footsteps – limping.

FATHER: What's with the walk?

5.

SFX: Rain and traffic in city. Ambience of clothing shop. City sounds and rain through glass window.

VOICE: It is now 5:16 PM.

MUSIC

MAN: Immediately after moving out of his apartment, the Woman, whom we've already met, changed jobs. She had worked in a bank, but after the break-up, she took a job in an agency selling airline tickets, just across the overhanging roof where they ran into each other. She smoked, even when she wasn't on a break, daydreaming that she, too, was flying all around the world, to all these cities, where dreams came true and everyone was happy.

MAN: This tie is better, yes.

WOMAN: And you?

MAN: Me?

WOMAN: Yes.

MAN: What? Me, nothing... I mean, same old, same old.

WOMAN: So, you're still at that school?

MAN: Same school, same library, same books.

WOMAN: Hm. I googled you once, you know.

MAN: You did? Why?

WOMAN: I don't know. Stupid, I know. Bah... I wanted to know how you were.

MAN: So, you googled me. *Laughs.*

WOMAN: I knew it would sound stupid.

MAN: It's not, but there's nothing about me. On the internet.

WOMAN laughs.

WOMAN: What colour is it?

MAN: What?

WOMAN: His suit.

MAN: Oh.

WOMAN: What colour is it?

MAN: Black.

WOMAN: Okay. Let's take a peek on the other side.

MUSIC

MAN: My father's been asking about you.

WOMAN: Asking what?

MAN: This and that. He's asking when you'll come by.

WOMAN: What, you haven't... You haven't told him we are no longer...
Really?

MUSIC

MAN: He's received a lifetime achievement award.

WOMAN: Really?

MAN: Yes.

WOMAN: Way to go! That's...

MAN: The presentation is tonight, at the Translators' Society.

WOMAN: He's always had a knack for these things.

MAN: Yeah.

MUSIC

WOMAN: For books and stuff.

MAN: True. He writes them, I keep them.

WOMAN: You should've told him, really.

SFX: Traffic in city. Bell above shop entrance.

MAN: Sorry.

WOMAN: Buy this one, it goes nicely with the black.

MAN: Yeah.

6.

MUSIC

VOICE: It is now 3:13 PM.

MAN: What is there beside waiting? Waiting to start living, waiting to feel fulfilled, and then waiting for the wish to pass. These were the thoughts of the Man as he was rummaging through a drawer for the pills in the merry colour of hypertension. When he returned to the room, his Father told him that he had never loved his wife, the Man's mother.

SFX: MAN – clothes rustling. Needle of record player making scratching sounds. Rain and traffic through open window.

MAN: Wait a minute –

FATHER: I need water, for my pills.

SFX: FATHER shakes packet of pills. MAN – footsteps, clothes rustling.

MAN: Why now?

FATHER: I don't know anymore.

MAN: You don't know.

FATHER: Because you're here and I'm old. Because they gave me the lifetime achievement award. Because Hegel exploded in my living room. Because there was always another woman.

MAN: Here you go.

FATHER: Thanks.

SFX: FATHER takes glass and drinks down pill.

MAN: And? Who was she?

FATHER: Who was she.

MAN: Yes.

FATHER: I met her when I was studying in Russia. She had a husband and a child, even then. Her husband was shuffling some papers. A pencil pusher, she didn't talk much about him. And she was editing books for the Russian Pravda. She was beautiful and her name was Ana.

MAN: Mhm. So, that's why you were travelling there.

FATHER: Yes. Then she wrote me a letter. Twenty-five years ago, that it was over. I still went there, but she wouldn't see me. The letter, I still have it. But when you're old, you can eat letters and no one will think twice about it. Do you think twice about it?

MAN (*laughs*): No, Dad.

FATHER: You're mumbling. Now I wish your mother were here instead of me.

MAN: Why?

FATHER: You'd show up more often... Oh... Ah... I really need to polish my shoes now.

MAN: Okay...

FATHER: If I had one wish –

MAN: It would be what?

7.

SFX: Traffic in city. Bell above shop entrance. Clothing shop ambience – near exit. Sounds of city and rain coming in every time door opens.

VOICE: It is now 5:18 PM.

SFX: Bell above shop entrance. Traffic in city.

MAN: Wait...

WOMAN: Come on...

MAN: Just wait...

WOMAN: What's with the limp? Huh?

MAN: I just stepped funny.

WOMAN: This one's fine, I'm telling you. It will suit him. Bye.

SFX: Traffic in city. Bell above shop entrance.

MAN: Wait –

WOMAN: The shop assistant is watching.

MAN: Yeah, so?

SFX: Traffic in city. Bell above shop entrance.

WOMAN: She thinks we'll do a runner with her tie.

MAN *laughs*.

WOMAN: You know, I had a dream you were standing by some suitcase, which was floating in the air because it was held up by big balloons. It was like my birthday, but no one said Happy Birthday, and everyone was just saying, "He's vanished, just like that, he's disappeared..."

MAN: I...

WOMAN: ...Good bye. Bummer, really.

MAN: I'm...

SFX: Woman kisses him, suddenly.

WOMAN: You see? Nothing. You see? But he makes me happy.

MAN: I see.

WOMAN: Yes, he's a pilot, you know.

MAN: Great. Where does he fly?

WOMAN: He's a pilot, he flies. I don't know where. Everywhere, all over.

MAN: Mhm.

SFX: Traffic in city. Bell above shop entrance.

WOMAN: I met him at some convention. He got me this job, selling airline tickets.

MAN: Really?

WOMAN: And he wasn't hanging birds from trees.

MAN *smiles*.

WOMAN: Why are you looking at me like that?

SFX: Traffic in city. Bell above shop entrance.

MAN: Because you seem different. I've been following you around for days...

WOMAN: Wait a minute –

SFX: Traffic in city. Bell above shop entrance.

MAN: Yeah.

WOMAN: Oh...

SFX: Traffic in city. Bell above shop entrance.

8.

SFX: MAN fiddling with keys.

VOICE: It is now 3:29 PM.

MUSIC

MAN: Nothing that ever was should be forgotten, that's what his Father was thinking, but he couldn't say it. He couldn't have known this woman from Moscow wasn't going to wait for him for ever. She sent him a letter saying she was happier without him. Years later, he ate the letter.

SFX: Sounds of rainy city coming in through window. FATHER polishing shoes. MAN fiddling with keys.

MAN: Can you do it by yourself?

FATHER: I don't need anyone. That woman has an annoying habit, anyway.

MAN: The nurse?

FATHER: Yes, the nurse. She keeps opening her mouth and words come out.

SFX: MAN fiddling with keys. Needle of record player making scratching sounds.

MAN: Why didn't you leave Mum?

FATHER *sighs*.

MAN: It wasn't because of me?

FATHER: No.

MAN: So, why didn't you? Because it was better that way?

FATHER: It just happened that way.

SFX: FATHER puts down shoes.

MAN: And Mum?

FATHER: Your mother's gone. Maybe that woman is gone too, or her husband. He's... He was a pencil pusher. But I still ask myself a lot of questions, so I know I'm still alive...Can you forgive me?

MAN: Do I have to?

FATHER: Ha. You're still doing it. Fiddling with keys.

SFX: MAN puts keys back in pocket.

MAN: I'll go get you a tie now... And you take a bath, okay?

FATHER: Yeah, yeah...

SFX: MAN footsteps, clothes rustling.

MAN: What kind of tie, Dad?

FATHER: Umph... You're mumbling again.

MAN: I'm asking what kind of tie you want.

FATHER: To go with the suit. Just some tie to go with it, I don't know.

MAN: You have a nice suit.

FATHER: Yeah, yeah.

MAN: Do you have your speech ready?

SFX: Clothes rustling. Needle of record player making scratching sounds.

FATHER: You've lost weight. I think.

MAN: I haven't.

FATHER: Do you eat? Is she a good cook?

MAN: She is.

FATHER: Where is she? Why does she never come by anymore?

MAN: Dad –

FATHER: Wait, I'll get my wallet.

MAN: No need. I have money.

FATHER: You're different.

MAN: Sorry?

FATHER: Just go get the fricking tie.

MAN: Come on, tell me.

SFX: Clothes rustling.

FATHER: Tell you what? Everyone's expecting me to say something tonight. Something that carries weight, something fitting, right? About me, and then even more about them, particularly about them. It's all words, all the time, why would I prepare a speech?

MAN: You don't have to... You said I was different. Different how?

SFX: Needle of record player making scratching sounds.

FATHER: Oh, that. I just didn't imagine you like this, what can I say? What, I'm old, I can say things, right? I just didn't.

MAN: You just didn't... Hmm... What is it, Dad?

FATHER: When you're running out of life, you should still ask questions of yourself.

MAN: Why should you?

FATHER: You should, to know you're still alive... You know, there's just too much of everything.

MAN: Of what?

FATHER: Of words and conversations.

MAN: What else is left?

SFX: Needle of record player making scratching sounds.

FATHER: That what is left.

MAN: What do you mean?

FATHER: I mean, you came early. It's easy for you. You're young and I'm old.

MAN: I know, Dad. You're old and I'm young. I'll be back soon.

SFX: MAN footsteps, clothes rustling.

9.

SFX: Ambience of coffee shop.

VOICE: It is now 5:40 PM.

SFX: MAN fiddling with keys.

WOMAN: So, you've been... following me. Long?

MAN: Yes.

WOMAN: Yes. *Laughs.* I don't believe this. You're still doing it.

MAN: Doing what?

WOMAN: Playing with your keys. *Laughs.* Well, he doesn't play, you know, he's serious.

MAN: Mhm.

WOMAN: He has a wife, two kids, can you imagine? And I know that from day one, but I'm still seeing him. So what? Single men our age, there's something wrong with them anyway, right? *Laughs*. Right? You, for example, aren't normal. And I'm a whore.

MAN: You're not.

WOMAN: Mhm, I am. A big one. A slut.

MUSIC

MAN: How about a stiff drink? Instead of coffee.

WOMAN: Do I look like I need a stiff drink?

MAN: I don't know. No, I'm just asking. Before, you –

MUSIC

WOMAN: I, what? What? Listen, this is awful. Don't you get it? I don't think you do. Actually, you have no idea, it's a total bummer, you know? For me, all this is just completely... You and me and all this, do you get it? I just can't.

MAN: Fine, you can't.

WOMAN: You broke up with me without any explanation.

MAN: I didn't know, what –

WOMAN: What didn't you know? What didn't you know?... Okay, what's all this about?

MAN: I'd like you to take my dog. I mean, I'd like you to have it.

MUSIC

WOMAN: Wait a minute. Is he dead?

MAN: Who?

WOMAN: The dog.

MAN: No.

WOMAN: Like that bird, that sparrow on the tree.

MAN: No.

WOMAN: Oh, you're sick.

MAN: Forgive me.

SFX: Ambience of coffee shop.

WOMAN: What?

MAN: For not loving you, ever.

WOMAN: Ever?... You see, that I didn't know.

MAN: I'm sorry...

SFX: Ambience of coffee shop.

WOMAN: Today, I rang at his wife's door...But I didn't wait for her to open. It's stupid to be a woman, you see, if that woman is me. He flies to all these cities of his, where dreams come true and everyone is happy, and it won't be the end of the world for me, either. You know, I don't even question it anymore, at all. And then all this... Ah, it doesn't matter. Now, I just live. *Sniffs*. Do you have any cigarettes left? No, this will be my absolutely last one. For today.

SFX: Lighting up cigarette, smoking.

MUSIC

WOMAN: And what... What will I do with your dog?

MAN: I don't know, I have no one to give him to.

WOMAN: *Laughs.* I see... Oh, that's too bad.

MAN: Why?

MUSIC

WOMAN: Well, I don't know. I wish you came to me yesterday. Like, yesterday or... or a couple of days ago. Or like a week ago, and asked me to take your dog. Because yesterday, yesterday I was still a bit different... And that's all?

MAN: No. I'm ill... It started with my stomach, when we were still... A dull pain, nothing serious. But it wouldn't go away, so I went to... But by then it had spread to the bones. I don't know... It's so weird. First, they're telling you stuff you don't understand, and then they don't say anything anymore. And it's not good when they stop talking, right?... And so I thought I needed to take care of a few things, figure out what to do about Dad.

WOMAN: Mhm.

MAN: And then I have the dog, you see. He needs to be taken for walks...

MUSIC – DRONES

MAN: What?

10.

MUSIC – DRONES

SFX: Door creaking. WOMAN entering toilet. Air freshener rattling. Soap coming out of dispenser. WOMAN turning on tap and washing hands.

WOMAN *sobbing.*

FATHER: Can I tell you something?

WOMAN: Yeah...

SFX: Water running. Water dripping in drain.

MUSIC – DRONES

FATHER: Maybe I was dreaming. I saw my mother. A couple of days ago. I saw her coming towards me, walking through the room, and then flying into my mouth like a moth, weird. With wings and everything, like she was trying to choke me, and there was nothing I could do, because it felt right. It's not like we'll be in the history books; because we've lived boisterously, but too frivolously. We've lived stupidly. Just go ahead and ask this whole army of Russians I translated. My work made me accept all illusions in turn, as they were coming. One after the other, nicely in turn.

WOMAN: All this about illusions – I know what it's like. There were things that I had, and then slowly, they slipped away... But him... I did love him. I did love your son.

WOMAN *breathes out.*

FATHER: I don't remember anything anymore... Farewell, fears of old, see you in another life.

WOMAN: Farewell, fears of old, see you –

FATHER: In another life.

WOMAN: In another life.

11.

SFX: Ambience of rainy city, under overhanging roof.

VOICE: It is now 6:25 PM.

MAN: Well, here we are.

WOMAN: I'd invite you upstairs, but – you know... Once I told you I was going to change, do you remember?...

MAN: Mhm.

WOMAN: That's what I said to you. And then you said that people hate it when others change. But you just don't love me anymore.

SFX: Traffic in rain.

WOMAN: It's better this way...

MAN: Yes.

WOMAN: ... Isn't it?

MAN: Yes. Good bye.

WOMAN: And careful with –

MAN: With what?

WOMAN: Well, with the tie. So, it doesn't get wet. It's a nice tie, it would be a shame.

MAN: Yeah.

WOMAN: Say hello to your dad.

MAN: Yeah, for sure.

MUSIC

WOMAN: Yes, what did you say?

MAN: Nothing.

WOMAN: Did you say something?

MAN: No, I didn't...

WOMAN *sighs*.

MAN: ... I'm off, this is important for him. And for his books.

WOMAN: Of course, but...

MUSIC

MAN: You can see me, I'm fine...

MAN: So –

WOMAN: Just wait a minute, will you? I'll be right back, will you wait?

MAN: Yes.

SFX: WOMAN running up stairs into apartment block.

MUSIC

MAN: The Man decided to wait; he still had some time left. But as he was waiting, he was thinking of all these unknown people. That's the way it is, while you're alive. But once all this is gone, not much will be left; he was thinking about that, as well. What a noiseless world, after everything that was.

SFX: WOMAN running down stairs from apartment block.

WOMAN: Sorry. I couldn't find it right away.

MAN: What's this?

WOMAN: You see what it is.

MAN: A book.

WOMAN: By Akhmatova. In Russian. You know where I have it from? Vienna. I bought it when we were in Vienna.

MAN: I didn't know.

WOMAN: I wanted to chuck it away after we had... Oh, but we're not kids, are we?

MAN: We're not.

WOMAN: And now it's for your father, anyway.

MAN: His Russians.

WOMAN: And it was expensive as hell, too... (*Laughs.*) I'm kidding. Go ahead, take it.

MAN: Thank you.

WOMAN: I'm sorry if I made you –

MAN: No, I won't be late. Thank you.

MUSIC

WOMAN: No, it's fine... Okay... Call... me... if...

MUSIC

MAN: Yeah, I will.

WOMAN: Well, then. So, what are you going to do about the dog, then?

MAN: I'll think of something, don't worry.

WOMAN: Okay.

MAN: Yeah.

WOMAN: Take care.

MAN: Yeah, you too.

SFX: They kiss.

12.

SFX: Gas furnace working.

VOICE: It is now 7:14 PM.

SFX: FATHER in tub, MAN trying to hoist him up. Water dripping.

FATHER: Get out!

MAN: Shall I call someone? Shall I?

FATHER: Don't you dare, no, no. Get out –

MAN: What happened, Dad?

FATHER: Do you hear me?

MAN: Come on –

FATHER: What? Get out.

MAN: Sit down first... Can you do it?

FATHER: Leave me, I'll manage... Oh, dear... Uh...

MAN: Are you okay?... Are you okay?... Can you hear me?

FATHER: I don't know if I'm okay.

MAN: What happened? How did you fall?

FATHER: I don't know.

MAN: Are you in pain?... Come on, sit down.

FATHER: I will, all right?

MAN: Come on, sit down.

FATHER: What time is it?

MAN: Try to stand up, slowly.

SFX: FATHER tries to stand up.

MAN: What happened?

FATHER: Time, what time is it?

MAN: I don't know, Dad. Seven something.

FATHER: You're mumbling.

MAN: It's seven. Wait, have you done something with the gas?

FATHER: What?

MAN: You've been tampering with the heater.

FATHER: Look, who's talking.

MAN: What was it then? Hm?

SFX: Gas furnace working.

FATHER: I'm scared.

MAN: What are you scared of?

FATHER: Eh... Pass me the towel... What time is it?

MAN: Dad, we don't have to go there if you...

SFX: FATHER towelling off.

FATHER: I have no words, no more. If I die, leave the balcony open.

MAN: That's Lorca, Dad.

FATHER: That's what I'm telling you. I have no words.

MAN: You were never at a loss for words.

FATHER: I'm bleeding.

MAN: Wait... We'll put on a plaster.

SFX: Man looking for plaster.

FATHER: You're mumbling, I keep telling you.

MAN: Plaster, for the wound.

FATHER: Don't shout, I'm not deaf.

MAN: You know, it might be better if you stayed at home.

FATHER: Better? Better for whom?

MAN: Where do you keep them? The plasters?

SFX: Bathroom cabinets, drawers opening.

FATHER: Down here... Not that drawer. This one here.

SFX: MAN puts plaster on FATHER's forehead. Closes drawer.

MAN: There, we're done.

SFX: Gas furnace crackling.

FATHER: I've dealt with words all my life; maybe there aren't as many as I think there should be.

MAN: Mhm.

FATHER: Maybe I've used mine up.

MAN: Is that so?

FATHER: Well, we'll see. Help me, will you?

MAN: Yes.

SFX: MAN helps FATHER go into room. Footsteps.

FATHER: We old people cut ourselves often, we go bad quickly, like a sausage...

MAN *smiles*.

FATHER: What do we do now that I've freshened up so nicely?

MAN *laughs, followed by FATHER*.

SFX: Needle of record player making scratching sounds.

FATHER: You know, when you don't have an alternative, this is as good a life as any. But it's easy for me, I'm old and I was never all that good.

MAN: Come on, just drop it.

SFX: Ambience of rainy city coming in through open window.

FATHER: All right, all right... What's that dog of yours doing?

MAN: I don't know, he's at home, sleeping, I guess. He's a good dog when I'm gone, sleeping all the time.

FATHER: I see, yes, yes, sleeping, yes... Maybe I could get used to that dog... You know.

MAN: Wait, what do you mean by that?

FATHER: What? What if you all came here? To live with me. She, you and the dog. You have a pretty wife...

MAN *sighs*.

FATHER: When she comes for breakfast again, I'll tell her that. Does she like your dog?

MAN: Dad –

FATHER: She likes him, you say... What's that book doing there?

MAN: Wait, you've spotted this particular book in all this mess?

FATHER: Well, I know that this particular one isn't mine.

13.

SFX: Ambience of rainy city at night, under roof, on terrace. Noises from inside; crowd of people partying, celebrating.

VOICE: It is now 9:47 PM.

MAN: Hey, my father says thank you...For the book.

WOMAN (*on the phone*): Oooh, how is he?

MAN: He's been accepting congratulations for the past hour...

WOMAN (*on the phone*): Oh...

MAN: It's very ceremonial.

SFX: Ambulance siren.

MAN: I don't know, I stepped outside... It's still raining.

WOMAN (*on the phone*): Yeah.

MAN: Have I by any chance –

WOMAN (*on the phone*): What?

MAN: You were in the middle of something.

WOMAN (*on the phone*): No, no, no, no... I wasn't, I just... Can you hold on a bit... Just a moment... Hello?... Are you still there?

MAN: Yes... Are you okay?

WOMAN (*on the phone*): As I was saying, today is a...

MAN, WOMAN: Bummer.

WOMAN (*on the phone*): Yes.

MUSIC

MAN and WOMAN laugh.

MAN: Hey, you're pretty today.

WOMAN (*on the phone*): Sorry?

MAN: You look different, that's what I was trying...

WOMAN (*on the phone*): I'm pregnant. With the pilot. Can you imagine?

SFX: Rain.

WOMAN (*on the phone*): Hello? Are you still there?

MAN: Why didn't you –

WOMAN (*on the phone*): What?

MAN: Say something, before. Huh?

MUSIC

WOMAN (*on the phone*): Why are you calling?

MAN: I don't know, my father has a plaster on his forehead.

WOMAN (*on the phone*): Oh...

MAN: He was showering and fell in the bath tub.

WOMAN (*on the phone*): Is he all right?

MAN: I think so. Hegel exploded in his living room.

WOMAN laughs. MAN laughs.

MAN: While Fichte and Schelling were short on time, I guess.

WOMAN laughs.

MAN: He wants me to move in with him.

WOMAN (*on the phone*): Wait, doesn't he know?

MAN: When this is over, I'll tell him.

WOMAN (*on the phone*): Yes, okay. Because you have to.

MAN: Yes. But I can't do it any sooner. When this is over, I will.

14.

SFX: MAN and FATHER walking up stairs.

VOICE: It is now 11:25 PM.

MUSIC

MAN: And then, it happened on the stairwell of all places, the most ridiculous place for big truths. His Father said nothing, he clutched to the award he got for all the words he had given meaning to, the plaster on his forehead came loose and a red mark from the wound appeared. They were both dripping wet from the rain, trams were running along the streets, and the Father sat down on a stair somewhere halfway up to his apartment. The Man sat down next to him, and for a while they just sat like that without speaking.

SFX: MAN and FATHER sit down on stairs. Clothes rustling.

FATHER: You and I have never –

MAN: It doesn't matter.

FATHER: How does it not matter? We've never...

MAN: We haven't.

FATHER: Why haven't we?

MAN: Hm. If you can put life into words, it doesn't make it more valuable... You know Mum knew about that woman... from the beginning.

FATHER: She knew. And so did you.

MAN: So?

FATHER: I should've eaten the letter a long time ago.

MAN: *Laughs.* You are still bleeding a bit.

FATHER: And I wasn't living... Neither here nor there.

SFX: FATHER hands him piece of paper, MAN takes it.

FATHER: Here, give this to your girlfriend.

MAN: Dad, we've not been together for a long time.

FATHER: Well, take it anyway. I translated this for her, from that book of hers.

SFX: MAN unfolds the paper and reads.

FATHER: Could you read it?

MAN: Hm. I could.

FATHER: It's in pencil, so I –

MAN: I've read it... Shall we go upstairs now?

SFX: MAN puts letter away.

FATHER: You know, all I think about is the things that have passed me by. About the woman who didn't want me and about the woman I reproached all her life for staying with me. Well, maybe this is what I had to say.

MAN: That's not how Mum –

FATHER: You think I don't know I disappointed you? You think I don't see that?

MAN: I'm not blaming you for anything, Dad.

FATHER: Like hell you don't.

MAN: I just... I'm scared. For myself. For you. I'm scared, but I can't say that to you.

FATHER: You've said it.

MAN: I have.

FATHER: You're scared. Out there, tonight. Everyone was saying what a great guy you were. You have a great son, he turned out well.

MUSIC – DRONES

FATHER: And I said, biscuits turn out well, not people...

MAN: *Smiles.*

FATHER: You are my son.

MAN: Yes.

FATHER: Does it hurt?

MUSIC – DRONES

MAN: What?

FATHER: This, everything. This... disease.

MAN: A bit... Yes... Sometimes.

15.

SFX: Rain falling on umbrella, city.

VOICE: It is now 1:42 AM.

WOMAN: You are soaked through and through.

MAN: A long day...

WOMAN: Well...

MAN: Well... After a while, this thing didn't help anymore.

WOMAN: The umbrella? It happens. Step under mine.

MAN: Thanks. I'm dripping.

WOMAN: Mhm.

MAN: And you, what are you doing here?

WOMAN: I'm here.

MAN: Uh-huh. Are you following me?

WOMAN *smiles*. MAN *smiles*.

WOMAN: No, actually, I'm looking at myself in the shop window. One person, and yet two. You know what his take is? We'll live first and think later. Hm... I don't know. It doesn't sound all that smart to me.

MAN: No.

MAN *and* WOMAN *smile*.

MAN: No, indeed.

WOMAN: Oh... Fuck the fucking logic!

MAN: Hey, shall we go to my place? Huh?

MUSIC

SFX: MAN finds piece of paper, gives it to WOMAN.

MAN: This is from my father. To give to you when I see you.

WOMAN: Oh.

SFX: WOMAN takes paper and reads.

MAN: It's in pencil, can you read it?

WOMAN: Uh-huh... Oh, it's beautiful.

MAN: He translated it for you. After—

WOMAN: I'll go see him one of these days.

MUSIC

WOMAN: What will you do with him?

MAN: I don't know. He wants to stay at home, so, I don't know.

WOMAN: You're tired... You look tired.

MUSIC

WOMAN: I'm tired, too.

MAN: You didn't have to —

WOMAN: I had to. Because I'm sad.

MAN: Don't be, please.

WOMAN: Well, I am... If only I would still... still love you.

MAN and WOMAN smile sadly.

MAN: Is that why you're here?

MUSIC

WOMAN: I'm here to take your dog for a walk. That's why I'm here. Yes?

MAN: Yes.

WOMAN: You know what? I think it can – all still end well, that's what I wanted to... One has to believe in something, so, why not believe in this? You know? That it will end well. You'll see.

MAN: I think so, too.

WOMAN: Really?

MUSIC

MAN: Come here...

SFX: Rain falling on umbrella.

MAN: And then the Man put his arm around the Woman. The Woman snuggled up to him. And for a moment it seemed as if they had come from another time. But only for a moment.

THE END

Translated from Slovenian by Katarina Jerin