GOOD BOY
Milan Marković

To Jelica Satarić and the Group, for all I learned from them.
To Simona Semenič and Maja Pelević
To my family
Dramatis Personæ:

Dimitrije, 45  
Dragana, 40  
Darko, 16  
Tina, 12  
Miša, 14
Darko is drinking beer from a two-liter plastic bottle. He is startled by a sound, the bottle falls from his hands and he runs down the street.

Tina is kneeling on the ground, intently observing an ant hill. She turns and looks at:

Dragana
I can't. I can't tonight. Because... No honey, you know the reason. Tonight... No, I told you, I'm staying here tonight, and that's that. I know. Yes I was, so what. Two consecutive nights in my own house, is that a sin? I can't. I can't change my plans now. Sorry. You'll have to, I'm sorry, but you'll have to... Yes, yes. I'm sorry, but you'll have to... No matter, no matter. You're so sweet... I know, but you'll really have to cancel. You're so sweet... You mean that? You're just saying that. You don't really mean it. I can't. I can't tonight. Sorry.
1. A flat.

Tina. Darko carefully enters. It is morning.

Tina
There's someone in the cellar.

Darko
 Notices her.
Oh.
Those...
You're not sleeping?
Those idiots. Did you see what they did...

Tina
Yes.

Darko
Not sleeping?

Tina
I got up at nine.

Darko
So why aren't you in school?
Did you see those damn idiots in five? What's all that about?
He unwraps a burek he brought along and starts eating it.
They said there's a kid stuck in an elevator.

Tina
A kid's stuck in an elevator.

Darko
Yeah, a kid, stuck in an elevator.

Tina
A girl.

Darko
Of course it's a girl.

Tina
What do you mean?

Darko
See, that's just one more reason why I'd never wanna live in a projects.
Tina
What do you mean, of course it's a girl?

Darko
Boys are more resourceful and independent. They are first to start playing outside, on their own. Of course the kid stuck in an elevator is a girl, it was probably the first time she went out on her own. She was probably thinking: see, all my friends from kindergarten are playing in the parking lot outside, and me and the rest of the girls can only watch from our rooms. Then she probably bugged her parents for days and weeks to let her out on her own, and when they finally did, she was punished by God for that.

Tina
I started going out before you did.

Darko
And now she's goanna have issues for years, because she bit off more than she could chew.

Tina
I started going out on my own before you did.

Darko
Yeah well, but I'm older than you. Anyway, why aren't you in school?

Tina
Schools in the afternoon. The whole week.

Darko
Damn! What the fuck's wrong with this burek!

Tina
There's someone living in our cellar.

Darko
What you talking about?

Tina
There's someone in the cellar.

Darko
Quit it.
Tina
Someone's living there.

Darko
C'mon Tina, don't start this shit again.

Tina
I saw Dragana going down with a platter-full of food down there last night.

Darko
And what were you doing here at a time like that?

Tina
What does it matter what I was doing? See, she locked the door.

...

Darko
You didn't start going out to play before I did.

Tina
Darko, there's someone down there, I'm telling you.

Darko
What do I care if there is? Even if this wasn't one of your shit games, which it is anyway, I wouldn't give a fuck. I wouldn't give a fuck even if that was Brad Pitt down there, playing checkers with the sister of Osama bin Laden. Because – you know what the real mystery is, Tina? The real mystery isn't why’s this door locked, the real mystery is why those shiteheads never put any cottage cheese in this so called cottage cheese burek. See, that's the real mystery. Hey, better yet, an even bigger mystery is why I bother to buy this burek every goddamn morning for breakfast. That’s the real mystery.

...

Tina
Give me a bite.

Darko
No. Besides, we don't have an elevator.

Tina
What?

Darko
We don't have an elevator.
Tina
So?

Darko
They left you out to play on your own before me, because we live in a house, not a projects.

Tina
I know where the key is.
I saw her hide it, she put it there.

*Points at a cupboard.*

Darko
Tina, why don't you sleep at nights? I mean, why don't you just lie down at eleven or midnight like every other ten-year old...

Tina
I'm twelve.

Darko
...Why don't you just lie down, read a magazine, read a love stories magazine, and then just fall asleep at some moment? Why can't you do that? Why do you have to wander around the house at night, coming up with mystery stories? Why? I don't understand that.

Tina
And where have you been all night?

Darko
You know where I was, I was out with the guys, anyway it doesn't matter, I don't imagine things.

Tina
You didn't sleep? I don't believe you and the guys slept at all. I'd say you went to «Štek», drank brandy until you were out of money, and then went outside to look for fights with people passing by.

Darko
That's not true.

Tina
And then you probably went out to look for people to have a fight with, but unfortunately there weren't any, because no one in their right mind comes through here at night, and then you probably just beat each other up.

Darko
That's not true. I'd never spend all my money, so I couldn't even buy my burek in the morning.
The phone starts ringing. It rings three times, then stops. It appears that only Tina even notices, but she doesn’t answer.

Tina
You know what, I don’t care about your burek.

Darko
Of course.

Tina
When you're drafted in the army, you won't get it for six months.

Darko
As if that matters. I'll live. Burek isn't the most important thing in the world. There are things in this world, more important than burek.

Tina
For example?

Darko
For example? Like, for example, who protects you when you sleep? Did you ever think about that, for example? When you're sleeping in your bed, not a care in the world, who protects you from the Albanians? From the Hungarians, the Chinese? You wouldn't like to think about that, would you? Such thoughts only rarely cross your mind, don't they?

Tina
Hardly ever...

Darko
When you're sleeping carelessly, dreaming of cute little bears and rabbits and foxes, who will protect you from the Albanians? It won't be burek protecting you. It'll be ME, protecting you from the Albanians. Me, standing on guard with my friends, sharing cigarettes with them.

Tina
You don't smoke, jerk.

Darko
Everybody starts smoking when they join the army.
And then I'll be keeping one eye on any suspicious movements in the dark, and the other on the circling cigarette, so it doesn't pass me.

Tina
And then a Chinese aims his sniper on the glow of the cigarette and shoots you down like a dog.

Darko
Quit bullshitting.

**Tina**
And when he goes back to Segedin, he's the hero of the day, for shooting a Serb, stupid enough to smoke on patrol.

**Darko**
Bullshit. The cigarette isn't with me, I told you I was waiting for my turn. Stupid bitch.

*The phone starts ringing again. Tina goes and answers it at the second ring.*
Shit, that phone of yours...

**Tina**
Hello?

**Darko**
Sometimes I jerk off for hours, I can't stop it.

**Tina**
I've got a bit of a stomach ache. Right here, under the bellybutton. It's like... Like a rock.

**Darko**
It calms me down. I get calm. Otherwise I can't sleep, I'm nervous or whatever the fuck you call that.

**Tina**
Like I had a rock there.

**Darko**
I just lay there and whine at myself like some bitch because of the old guy or because you're so fucked up or I start seeing circles before my eyes, big ones and small ones, and they drive me crazy, or I just can't close my eyes, you know like in Tom and Jerry, where they put matches under the eyelids, so they're like shutters on a window, and then I have to jerk off.

**Tina**
No.

**Darko**
It's not... sexual. When I jerk off, I don't think of anything, I just get full of a warmth, and sometimes I think, sometimes I think these are the moments, when I am closest to God, that's what I think. I think that God is watching me, and that's why my heart feels so warm. Without it, I'd do myself in, I swear. I couldn't handle it. I'd go nuts like a whining bitch and throw myself under a tram.

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1 Serb. for Szeged, city in Hungary near border with Serbia
Tina
I think you got the wrong number. I'm not lying, I have no reason to. Why would I lie to you? Looks at the receiver and hangs up.

Darko
Who was it this time? Michael Jackson?

Tina
Mother.

Darko
Mother?
What'd she say?

Tina
Says she's coming. Says I should heat up the cabbage rolls.

Darko
You should heat up the cabbage rolls?

Tina
Yea.

Darko
She made cabbage rolls?
She made them last evening, and now she told you to heat them up?

Tina
Well obviously she made them, if she told me to heat them up. I can't heat up something that hasn't already been cooked, can I?

Darko
I ain't eating them.

Tina
Why?

Darko
I have my reasons.

Tina
You have your reasons?

Darko
Yeah.
Tina
You have your reasons not to eat cabbage rolls?

Darko
Yeah. Because I know you're full of it again. She'd have to come home occasionally to make cabbage rolls, and she's never around.

Tina
Bullshit.

Darko
She's never around. And if she did come, she wouldn't be making cabbage rolls.

Tina
Ok, I'll just heat up enough for me, then.

Tina goes to the kitchen.

Darko
Cabbage rolls...

Darko goes to the toilet. Tina comes back from the kitchen, tries the bathroom door.

Tina
Oh c'mon... Get out of there.

Darko
Off
Why?

Tina
Because I can't hold it for two hours, that's why.

Dragana enters.

Dragana
Did you see...

Tina
I did.

Dragana
Terrible. It's terrible.

Tina
I want to go the toilet.
Dragana
You should have seen the parents.

Tina
Mom, tell Darko to get out of there.

Dragana
Like zombies. Blue, white, green. Do you know the girl?

Tina
What girl?

Dragana
The one that got stuck in the elevator.

Tina
Mom, I really need to go.

Dragana
Go where, sweetie?

Tina
To the toilet. I need to go to the toilet.

Dragana
And why don't you?

Tina
Because Darko is in there, jerking off.

Dragana
Can you put the kettle on for coffee, please?

*Tina goes into the kitchen. Dragana knocks on the bathroom door.*

Dragana
Darko?

Darko
*Off*
Yes?

Dragana
Come on out of there.
Dragana

Because I asked you to.

Darko

Off

I'm taking a dump.

Dragana

Doesn't matter.

Darko comes out of the toilet, Tina rushes into it.

Darko

How did you picture this, then?

Dragana

What?

Darko

How did you picture me emptying my bowels then? If you have me get out of the toilet regardless of the fact, that I'm about to take a dump, well then I'll have to do it elsewhere, won't I? Elsewhere in the flat, and that wouldn't be exactly nice, would it?

Dragana

You're talking nonsense.

Darko

It wouldn't be nice to go to the kitchen and shit on the stove. Or, for instance, into your bed. It wouldn't be exactly nice if I shat in your bed, would it?

Dragana

No, Darko, that would be terrible. Now quit it.

The phone starts ringing.

Tina

Off

I'll get it!

Tina comes out of the toilet and runs to the phone.
Darko
Her with her damn phone as well.

*Dragana goes into the kitchen.*

Tina
Hello?

Darko
If it's for me, I'm not here. Unless it's Nicole Kidman.

Tina *(in English)* Yes? I understand. Yes.

*Dragana returns with the coffee.*

Darko
She's talking to America.

Tina *(in English)* I am not sure because... Yes. He is not too healthy in his head today.

Dragana
Where are you going?

Darko
To hit the sack.

Tina
Darko, wait up. It's for you.

Dragana
Let him go to bed.

Darko
No kidding. Is it Nicole?

Tina
It's Mary, her secretary. But she'll make sure to give her your message, so you can talk to her.

Darko
Hello, Mary?
Oh, you speak Serbian... Bosnian Croatian... Wonderful. Fascinating. It gives me shivers for joy. Me? I didn't sleep too well. I have, well you could say so, some problems, and I couldn't sleep all night.
Wouldn't you agree, Mary, *(in English)* «life goes on». *(to Tina and Dragana)* A marvelous woman, her. *(into receiver)* Yes. I know. I believe that. I will. Say hi to Nicole for me. Tell her I think of her a lot. Of her as a person. Goodbye and God bless you. *Drops receiver and goes to his room.*

Wonderful woman. And she speaks great Serbian.

**Tina**

Isn't she? She really is wonderful, mom, believe me.

**Dragana**

Honey, Nicole knows who to hire. And she has plenty of money, she can afford to be picky.

**Tina**

So? She earned it fair and square. She didn't steal, did she?

**Dragana**

I'm not saying she did.

**Tina**

She did nothing illegal.

**Dragana**

But it's easier to make money in America.

**Tina**

She never stole, she's an actress.

**Dragana**

All I wanted to say is, if you're a marvelous and talented person like Nicole Kidman is, then it'll be easier to cash in on that in America, is all.

**Tina**

Think so? There, I'll ask next time.

**Dragana**

You go right ahead, honey. See, America is ruling the world right now, and it's sucking, you know, sucking the life out of small nations like our Serbian one, and then it builds up industries, like this... Hollywood industry. And we're left to our own devices. We try, we stumble around like, yes, exactly like some small mice, and then we look funny, even to us, let alone our neighbors. Can you imagine how funny we must look to them, stumbling around on the ground?

**Tina**

Are you trying to say, that Nicole Kidman is...

**Dragana**
But that's not the worst of it. No, not the worst of it. Then we stay without our identity, loose our soul, honey... not just our money. That's the worst part of it. You see, honey, once you lose your soul, there isn't the money in the...

**Tina**

Are you trying to say...

**Dragana**

As they say, there isn't the money in the world to bring back your soul. Once you've lost it.

**Tina**

Nicole Kidman's a whore.

**Dragana**

And then it's easy to hire some poor girl, like say, some girl from a farm in Texas, to pretend to be a good soul. When you don't have your own anymore.

**Tina**

I wish I knew this before...

**Dragana**

Your soul, that is.

**Tina**

Sorry?

**Dragana**

When you don't have your soul. When someone has lost their soul.

**Tina**

Has no soul...

**Dragana**

When someone has no soul.

**Tina**

Soul...

... Mom, who's in the cellar?

**Dragana**

What do you mean, honey?

**Tina**

Who did you take that food to yesterday night?
Dragana
Why would I be taking food down there? To whom? If I was hungry, if I really was hungry, I could eat in the dining-room, couldn't I? I mean, If I was really hungry. But I wasn't, yesterday. We ate french toast together, remember? In fact, I was thinking last night, this'll be too much for all of us.

Tina
That's right, we had french toast.

Dragana
All that bread, going to waste... when I could make french toast from it. That's what I was thinking last night. Better make french toast, or we'll have to throw all this bread away. And we were watching a movie, remember? We were watching a movie, eating french toast, and I didn't even notice how much I had eaten, until it was too late, until I had had too much.

Tina
Yeah, you ate too much. I remember you said: «There, I ate too much.»
So who did you take the rest of the food to?

Dragana
Honey, don't pester me. You know I didn't go into the cellar last night. That's, that's your imagination, your imagination is playing tricks on you, honey.

Tina
So why did you lock the door? Mom?

Dragana
Sorry?

Tina
The cellar door. It's locked. You locked it. Why?

Dragana
Cellar doors have to be locked.

Tina
They never were before.

Dragana
Cellar doors have to be locked. There's rats in there, there's all sorts of... there's rats in the cellar, who can't wait to...

Tina
The doors were never locked before.
Honey, rats can't wait, they can't wait to get upstairs. And they're dreadful animals, I'm sure you know that.

**Tina**
I know.

**Dragana**
They're filthy toothed disease carrying beasts. One bite from one of them, and you're done for.

**Tina**
But they can't open doors.

**Dragana**
And there's no cure. Do you have any idea how many people died of pest? I'm a nurse, I should know these things. If there's something I know about, it's this.

**Tina**
But they can't open doors, can they, mom?

**Dragana**
What's that, honey?

**Tina**
Rats can't open doors, isn't that right?

**Dragana**
Of course not, why should they?

**Tina**
So then, why...

**Dragana**
Although you never know. They're smart animals. They eat you up before you know it.

**Tina**
So why should the doors be locked then?

**Dragana**
What do you mean?

**Tina**
Why should the doors be locked, if they can't use doorknobs? The rats, I mean. They can't use the doorknob. And if they did, they couldn't reach it. And even if they could reach it, they don't have enough weight to be able to open the door. Isn't that right?
Dragana
Probably. Probably not.

Tina
So why are the doors locked then? The cellar doors?

Dragana
Honey, I need to get started on lunch. It's already late.

Tina
But mom...

Dragana
I really don't have time for nonsense.

Tina
Mom!

Dragana
Alright then... Imagine, I don't know... Imagine that your mom is a secret agent...

Tina
Who?

Dragana
What do you mean, «who»? How many mothers do you think you have? So, imagine I'm a kind of secret agent. That I'm on a mission, ok? A secret mission. Imagine that I have a secret mission of a national importance. That's what you should imagine. And so, as a secret agent, my mission would be to make sure, the cellar doors are locked, ok?

Tina
And to take down food.

Dragana
I never took any food down there, stop making things up. Didn't we, tell me, already have a talk about you making things up?

Tina
Yes.

Dragana
And what did the doctor say? He said I should let you make things up, you know, your phone calls and stuff, but you can't do it if it's important. Didn't we agree on that?

Tina
Yes.
Dragana
Let’s say I come back from work and you tell me, for instance, that the police called and that they had arrested Darko. Is it OK to make something like that up?

Tina
No. I can't. I can't make things up like that up.

Dragana
So stop talking about somebody being in the cellar as well. You're just freaking out people for no reason at all. Did you pester Darko about this as well?

Tina
Yes.

Dragana
And what'd he say?

Tina
That he doesn't give a damn. That he doesn't give a damn, if the door is locked.

Dragana
There you go. See, that's like him. It's like him to know what's important and what isn't..

Tina
And he mentioned cottage cheese burek.

Dragana
Come again?

Tina
He said that cottage cheese burek was a real mystery.

Dragana
*Glances at her watch.*
I need to get started on lunch.
*Walks off toward the kitchen.*

Tina
And the cabbage rolls?

Dragana
What cabbage rolls?

Tina
You told me to heat them up.
Dragana
Oh Tina.
Leaves.

Tina
...
I'm scared, I'm scared this is a...

Dragana
Off
You've got some time until school, why don't you go out and play?

Tina
...I think we didn't, we didn't understand each other the right way.
Goes out.
2. A park / a street / the cellar

Space 1 (park)

Tina
I know you're watching, I won't tell anyone. Don't go! I love it to have you here.
You wanna hear how I know? I'm not sure, I just walk down the street and suddenly I'm not
alone anymore. I feel your presence.
No, it's like this: I walk down a street, and everything is as usual, the cars, the pedestrians, blah
blah blah, and then at one moment I turn around when I'm crossing the street, look down it, and
at that moment it hits me.
You see? I can feel you. I'm no longer cold, and I feel a cold shiver, it feels good, and I don't
even have to turn around to know it's you, I just know it. And I never tell anyone about this,
they'd think I'm crazy, but you and me know. We know.
Don't go. You won't, will you? Look, I'll pretend you're not here. Or I could tell you some stories
nobody else knows. If you want. Just don't leave.

Space 2 (street)

Darko is sitting on a small wall and drinking beer out of a two-liter plastic bottle.

Space 3 (cellar), a colored light slowly getting stronger.

Dragana comes into it down a wooden stairs with a serving plate in her hands, with some
food and a bottle of beer. Dimitrije is sitting on the floor, nibbling on pumpkin seeds. He
looks up for a moment, when he hears the door open, and then returns his gaze to the
floor and resumes nibbling on the seeds.

Dragana
I couldn't come earlier... Sorry I'm late.

Puts the serving plate in front of Dimitrije. He takes the bottle, takes a swig from it and
resumes nibbling on the pumpkin seeds.

Dragana
I couldn't come earlier. The kids... Tina, it looks like she saw me last night, when I was coming
out of here. I had to wait. Just to be sure.
I think last night was the first time she saw me. I had to lock the door. I don't, I didn't want to
think about it, but the cellar is no place for a child.

Dimitrije
And Darko?

Dragana
He's sleeping. What are you looking at me like that for, he's a night bird, you know that as well as I do.

Dimitrije
He goes out too much.

Dragana
He'll be alright, he goes out with friends.

Dimitrije
He goes out too much for his age.

Dragana
It's the little one that's problematic. She stalks me. I seriously believe she stalks me sometimes. And her fantasies....

Dimitrije
You're such a jerk.

Dragana
Why don't you eat? You haven't eaten in days, it worries me.

Dimitrije
I don't give a fuck.

Dragana
Don't be like that. I know this is difficult for you, but there's no need to look like that. Why don't you shave?

Dimitrije
What do you care?

Dragana
Don't start again.

Dimitrije
Whore.

Dragana
I don't think, seriously, I don't think I deserve this.

Dimitrije
Filthy whore.
I don't deserve to be treated this way. I take care, I'm the only one that takes care of you, and you...

Dimitrije
Drop dead.

...

Dragana
I seriously don't think I deserve to be treated this way. I could, I really could just leave you here. Nothing could stop me from just leaving you here to thirst and hunger all alone, well almost alone, you'd have the rats and bugs and dust as company, you know, if I wanted to. But I won't. Because you're my husband, and I love you, and I couldn't never leave you all alone.

Dimitrije
You're completely out of your rocker, you realize that? Absolutely fucking nuts.

Dragana
Because you are my husband, and I love you.

Dimitrije
Did Natalija come?

Dragana
You know, I think you know she comes here, all the time she comes here, almost every other day, and it's, I can't really look at her, you know, without thinking how ridiculous it all is, that she's coming, I mean really coming to see the kids. When you left, she quickly started taking interest in the kids, in large part in Darko, of course. She's taking care, she really started taking care of them. It's ridiculous, isn't it? Don't you think it's the least funny? Last time she was here, she said to me, can you imagine this, she said she was grateful to me. That she was grateful because I understood her. You know, that I, like, understand her, and that she's grateful for that. The woman is, to say the least...

Dimitrije
What? What were you gonna say?
Šta? Ona je šta?

Dragana
...
Confused. She's confused, to say the least. I don't want to use harsher words. As if she didn't know, and I think, you know, it's impossible to keep a secret in a small town like this, it's as if she didn't know hear any of the gossip.

Dimitrije
What gossip?
Dragana
You can't, in a small town like this it's very difficult to hide something like an affair. It's hard to conceal it, because people see, it can be seen. Of course they'll pretend they can't see it, you know in the name of decency, but it's seen, it can't be hidden. And her Miodrag, I can see it in his face when I see him, when I see him in the open market, I can see it when he looks at me. And her Miodrag knows what was happening when you two were staying at work late, he knows what was happening on that business trip to Negotin, so now when she comes to see the kids, he knows, and it's, you should see his face, it says a hundred things, it's obviously very painful to him. His lost look, looking desperately for, yes, you could say, looking desperately for sympathy, but doesn't get any. My heart breaks every time I see him, you should see him, he's like a ghost, walking around the open market with an empty basket, not knowing, what he wants to buy, where he's going, or maybe he's not even looking for anything, maybe he's just waiting for that look of sympathy from somebody, and it never comes.

Dimitrije
You'd love it if it were like that, wouldn't you?

Dragana
It's terrible, it's a terribly touching sight.

Dimitrije
You would really love it if it were like that, wouldn't you, it'd explain everything to you. But you're scared that maybe what I told you is the truth, that there was nothing between us other than friendship. You're terrified of the idea that we were nothing more than friends, because you don't have any friends. You never did. Even the guy who's screwing you right now, badly if I may say...

Dragana
Don't say that.

Dimitrije
This buddy you're going out to see at nights...

Dragana
What was I supposed to do after you left, wait for you to come back?!

Dimitrije grins.

Dragana
Should I have waited, like some martyr, for you to mercy me with your return?

Dimitrije
You're such a stupid bitch...

Space 2
Miša arrives.

Darko
I hate plans, you know that. I definitely don’t like them.

Miša
I know.

Darko
You know, making plans. I hate it. I’m not like that.

Miša
I know.

Darko
And let’s be realistic, Mišo, neither are you. You’re not, let’s be realistic, the kind to make plans. Especially not ones like, I think, all tangled up ones, for devious plans.

Miša
What do you mean?

Darko
Well it’s... You’re like... an honest guy, you could say you’re an honest, straightforward guy. And honest, straightforward guys don’t come up with plans, especially not devious ones.

Miša
Well, yeah... But I didn’t think we would be doing any serious planning. I thought maybe tonight we could...

Darko
No go.

Miša
What?

Darko
Tonight is a no go. There’ll be a fight. They’re coming from, didn’t you hear about this? from Radičeva, Tadija called them, you know Tadija?

Miša
Well then maybe before the fight? I thought...

Darko pulls out a gun.

Darko
No pieces, Tadija said no pieces, but you know those pricks from Radićeva, they're...

Miša
Yeah.

Darko
I mean, they're bastards, you never know.

Space 3

Dragana
Eat it, it'll get cold.
I can't, I've decided long ago that I won't wait for you, but I wont abandon you either. I want you to know that. It's important to me that you know it.
Now eat, it'll get cold.

Dimitrije
You're completely insane.

Dimitrije drinks on.

Space 2

Darko
So what did you have in mind?

Miša
Huh?

Darko
What did you have in mind?

Miša
Well, I could drop by before tonight, if that's what you meant...

Darko
She's crazy, you know that?

Miša
I know... I just thought... We've known eachother for a long time. I don't have any grand plans. I just thought you could take me to her tonight, and I could have a nice talk with her.

Darko
I'm not sure you know what you ask of me. She's still my... I mean, we're talking about my sister here, not some, well, some slut from the street. I mean, you're still, how should I say, a loser, eventhough you do have good sides, and this is my sister we're talking about here, not some...

**Miša**
Darko, I just want to, I just want to talk to her. I won't be disrespectful.

**Darko**
We're talking my sister here, not some slut from the street.

**Miša**
Here, I've got some... I know it's stupid to give money, but I figured you'd know best what you wanted. So I thought... Just give him some money, and he'll know best what to buy for himself.

**Darko**
Well thought out.

**Miša**
Here. It's not much, but as I said, I said I don't stay in peoples' debt.

**Darko**
Mighty nice of you. At first I didn't... well I always told people you're an OK guy.

**Miša**
Tell me, Darko, what's the fight about?

**Darko**
Huh?

**Miša**
Why are those guys coming in from Radićeva, what are you fighting about?

**Darko**
What do you mean?

**Miša**
Never mind.

**Darko**
What do you mean, «why are we fighting»?

**Miša**
Doesn't matter.

**Darko**
Simple, because they're bastards, you know what bastards they are, don't you?
You're a weird one, Mišo. It's just like they say, you're a weird one.
3. The flat

Darko. Tina enters, dressed ready for adventure.

Darko
Where’ve you been? Actually, I'm not even interested.

Tina
What?

Darko
Nothing. I've been waiting for you.

Tina
Sorry?

Darko
Don't start on me.

Tina
What?

Darko
Nothing you could tell me right now interests me. I don't wanna hear about how you were chasing butterflies, or how you were observing the, well, observing the... ants, or whatever it is.

Tina
OK already. I wasn't gonna. I mean, I wasn't gonna tell you about that.

Darko
I'm not even remotely interest. I can't listen to you, my head'll blow up.

Tina
I wasn't gonna tell you that, because I wasn't out chasing butterflies. But I did have a great time, nevertheless.

Darko
Everytime I sleep in the afternoon, I get headaches. I want, I just want to take a, one long nail and knock it right into my head. Right into my head.

Tina
I wasn't out chasing butterflies, but I did find a great ants' nest. Down by the school, next to that yellow wall behind the newsstand, you know where I mean? I even found the front and the back... did you know that ants have a front and back entrance? Well, actually it's an entrance and an exit. Very practical, isn't it? Don't you think that's practical?
Darko
Right into the head.

Tina
That way, they don't get in each other's way. Even if you look very closely, you can hardly ever see two ants get in each other's way. They're very thoughtful bugs. They have those little antennae that they communicate with. And when they find food, they form two lines, one in one way, one in the other. And when two of them meet, you can see them moving their antennae, communicating something to each other.

Darko
It's not called an ants' nest.

Tina
Huh?

Darko
It's called an anthill, not an ants' nest.

Tina
Why are you in such a bad mood?

Darko
I have a headache. My head hurts. It's about to explode.

Tina
That's because you sleep in the afternoons.

Darko
...
Oh, you think?
...

Tina
You always have headaches when you sleep in the afternoon.

Darko
See, maybe you're right. Maybe it does have something to do with that.

Tina
Is Dragana back already?

Darko
She's in the store.

Tina
In the store? Mom's shopping in the store?

Darko
Yeah.

Tina
Not true.

Darko
What?

Tina
I was just there. I just got back from the store, and she's not there. She's not in the store.

Darko
You were in the store, and she wasn't there, and on the basis of that you came to the conclusion, right, that it's not true, that she went to the store.

Tina
Yes.

Darko
And it never occured to you, I mean, it never crossed your mind for one second, that maybe she went to a different store? You know, that store on the corner isn't the only one in the world, and not even the only one in this town. I mean, she could have gone to a different store, couldn't she?

Tina
It's not the only one. But when mom says she's going to the store, she always means the store on the corner. And she's not there right now.

Darko
Well then she must have lied. She must have deceived us. She said she was going to the store, when in reality she went to the newsstand. Terrible. What a terrible woman.

Tina
She's not at the newsstand either, I was there as well.

Darko
OK, Tina, I don't have, I mean, do you get what I'm saying when I say that I really don't have the energy for this right now? I'm trying to concentrate. Can you understand what I'm saying?

Tina
You need to concentrate.

Darko
Right. At the moment, I really need to concentrate.

Tina
OK. I understand. Everybody needs to concentrate sometimes.

_The doorbell rings. Darko goes to open the door. He comes back with Miša, who's carrying a pack of chocolates._

Tina
Hi.

Miša
Hi.

Darko
Do you know Miša?

Tina
Sort of. You could say so. Sometimes he stalks me.

Darko
What do you mean?

Tina
Sometimes he walks at a distance from me, when I'm out alone.

Miša
I think you confused me with someone.

Tina
A couple of days ago he bought me ice-cream. Remeber buying me ice-cream a couple of days ago? He was walking behind me on the street, hiding in corners and thinking I didn't notice him. That's what you were thinking, wasn't it? So I went behind a corner and surprised him. He was so scared! Then he said he must buy me ice-cream.

Darko
And?

Tina
And what?

Darko
Did he buy you ice-cream?

Tina
Yeah, I told you he did. A cone. Chocolate flavor.
Miša
I didn't, really...

Darko
A chocolate flavored ice-cream cone...

Tina
I don't mind that, Miša, I like having you around. Otherwise I'd be too scared to walk around the streets at night.

Miša
I brought you some chocolates.

...

Tina
Say it.

Miša
Me?

Tina
Yeah.

Miša
Say what?

Tina
I don't know. You look, I mean, you look like you, like you want to say something.

Miša
Well, I... I thought...

Darko
Well, I'm going out... to to make sure that the tyres are full. The bycicle tyres. I'll need a bycicle, and I need the tyres to be full. I'll think... later. 
Leaves.

Miša
I was thinking, well if you're OK with it, I'd like to, if you wouldn't mind, to be, you know, to be with you.

Tina
Sorry?
Miša
What?

Tina
I didn't hear you.

Miša
That's alright.

Tina
Well, say it again.

Miša
Say what?

Tina
What you just said.

Miša
Erm, I was just saying I like it here, and I'd like it if, I mean, it would be great if we could see each other more often.

Tina
Well, what do you know about ants?

Miša
I saw them on TV...

Tina
Ants?

Miša
On... TV...

Tina
On TV? You saw ants on TV?

Miša
Yeah.

Tina
And then, I mean, and then everybody's surprised our civilisation is going down the drain.

Miša
Because of me? You're not saying that it's because of me that...
Tina
Yes, because of you. You have no soul, my friend. It's not beyond repair, but it's a fact – you have no soul.

Miša
What do you mean, I don't have a soul...

Tina
It was sucked out of you by Nicole Kidman.

Miša
Who?

Tina
Nicole. Nicole Kidman. The actress. But we'll get that fixed. We'll need, it's not beyond repair, it won't be easy, but it's not beyond repair, we'll need plenty of mud.

Miša
Mud? There's a burst pipe near the open market.

Tina
Plenty of mud. This process takes time and, you should know this, dedication. But you'll be free afterwards.

Miša
Free of this Nicole?

*The «phone» rings.*

Tina
Of her also. Excuse me.

*She answers the «phone».*

Hello? *(to Miša)* I knew it! *(into the receiver)* Mhm, yes. We do have a stove. And a fridge. Yes. We do have a water heater as well. They're white, yes. White! The ceiling? Well, it's... sorta... Fluorescently green with pink polka dots. You don't say... What do you think I am, an eggplant?

*Slams the receiver down.*

It looks like they have, I mean, it's obvious that they have this place bugged.

Miša
Tina. I'm sorry, but I have to say this. This is all, sorry to say this, so oldfashioned.

Tina
What is?
Miša
Bugging devices. It's all done from satellites. I've seen it on... I mean, a friend told me how it works. It's by now a completely, completely automated process. Everything is being recorded.

Tina
Do you have a bathing suit on?

Miša
What do you mean?

Tina
Do you have a bathing suit on?

Miša
You mean, right now?

Tina
Yeah.

Miša
Well... No, I don't.

Tina
Why not?

Miša
I... didn't plan on going swimming.

Tina
Doesn't matter. Let's go. We can't lose any more time.

Miša
Well... You shouldn't forget... I mean, maybe...

Tina
What?

Miša
What about the chocolates.

Tina
Take'em along, we'll figure out what to do with them on the way.

_Tina leaves a chocolate on the table for Darko. They rush outside. Darko returns with a child's trike and a bycicle pump._
Darko
Look at what I...

_Darko notices they are gone. He tries to ride the trike, but his gun gets in the way, so he pulls it out and places it on the table. When he does this, he notices the chocolate Tina left him. He puts it into his mouth, gets back to the trike, but only for a brief time. Then he gets serious, takes the gun, and leaves the room._
4. A street

_Tina and Miša, covered with mud._

**Tina**
C'mon, let's sit down a little, I'm, well, I'm beat. I'm really...

**Miša**
Here?

**Tina**
I'm really tired. I haven't run this much since, I can't even remember when was the last time I ran this much.

**Miša**
They were really angry.

**Tina**
That's because people stick their noses in, well, everything. Bu especially in us young ones.

**Miša**
I think, well, that they got mad because we broke the pipe, 'cause we broke it again.

**Tina**
You said there was mud on the open market. Tell me, isn't that what you said?

**Miša**
It is.

**Tina**
You said there was mud on the open market? You said so?

**Miša**
I said so.

**Tina**
There wasn't, I think there wasn't a single speck of mud there. How did you think we could do this? If we didn't brake that pipe, this whole action would have been in vain.

**Miša**
I agree with you, _Tina_, of course we had to do it, I'm just saying that those people, I'm saying those people got mad because of that, that's all I'm saying.

**Tina**
I really don't know how you think we could do this without the mud.
Miša
I was just saying...

Tina
Oof, I'm beat.

Miša
I feel, I feel a little cold.

Tina
Of course you do. Of course you feel cold. Did you see The Matrix?

Miša
I get sick so easily.

*Tina* gets the box of chocolates from her bag and opens it.

Tina
You know that part, when Keanu Reeves wakes up all bald and puny in the matrix, after he had that pill, you know, he was cold too, then.

Miša
What?

*Tina* hands him a chocolate.

Tina
Keanu Reeves, The Matrix.

Miša
Yeah?

Tina
Well, you just had your pill.

Miša
What pill?

*A far-away shot from a gun can be heard, then two more. Miša flinches and looks in the direction of the shots.*

Tina
You just had a pill like that. And now...

Miša
Tina, why does...
Tina
Here you go, you deserved it. You were brave.  
*Offers him a couple more chocolates.*

Miša
No thanks. Listen, why does Darko hang out with Tadija?

Tina
Who?

Miša
Tadija. I don't like him, this Tadija. People who hang out with him keep getting into fights, one day someone's gonna get hurt.

Tina
Well it's like... Tadija isn't the problem here. It's a man thing, Miša. You'll be the same, if something bad happens to you in your life.

Miša
No I won't.

Tina
You'll be just like that, if you get really scared of something. Like Darko. He's scared. He's very frightened, they're all very frightened. And then they have to, you know, they have to prove it to themselves and others every day, how brave they are, how heroic.

Miša
I wouldn't do that. I wouldn't get into fights.

Tina
It's because... You know, for a time me and Darko slept in the living room, while the appartment, while it was being renovated, and one night daddy went into the cellar, silently opened the door, not to waken us, went down to the cellar and shot himself in the head. Darko ran down there first, and he saw it all...  
Want some more? Miša. Want some more chocolate?

Miša
No.

Tina
So now he's proving to himself how brave and strong he is by, well, by acting like a coward.

Miša
You're lying.
Tina
I'm not.

Miša
Your dad's on a business trip, your mom told me. You're always lying.

Tina
I don't lie, I imagine things.

Miša
Same thing.

Tina
No it's not. Besides, there are things I'm allowed to come up with, and those I'm not. I would never be allowed to come up with something like this.
And you believe my mom...

Miša
You're making this up as you go. If this really, I mean, really happened, he'd talk to your mom about it.

Tina
She's even crazier. They're all crazy. Especially the old geezers. You should hear the stories they come up with.

Miša
I'm cold.

Tina
Come here. 
Embraces him.

Tina
You're nothing more than a coward as well, aren't you? All men are, deep inside, cowards.

Miša
I think you're crazy.
I saw you once, I was taking the garbage out, and I saw you squatting behind the newsstand.

Tina
Crazy my ass.

Miša
You had some twig or something in your hand, and you were digging through the dirt. I stood there and watched you, and you were digging through the dirt for two hours like you were mad.
Tina
Two hours?

Miša
Two hours. You were digging like mad.

Tina
You stood in the middle of the street with a garbage can in your hands for two hours, staring at me?

Miša
Well, it was a weird sight.

Tina
I was observing ants. Real, living ants. They live there, you know... Behind the newsstand. Next to the school.

Miša
Well, and I was observing you...

Tina
...
You stink. You need to wash.

Miša
*Gets up.*
You're not completely right in the head, are you?

Tina
Wait, where are you going?

Miša
I'll go see if I can find Darko.

Tina
Why?

Miša
No real reason. It's on my way home, so...

Tina
Why do you wanna find Darko?

Miša
Well, I need to wash.
Tina
Why would you need to wash?

Miša
I'm muddy. I stink.

Tina
Miša!
Miša leaves, Tina dashes after him.
5. The flat

*Tina, sitting and waiting. She goes to the kitchen, then comes back to the room. She brings a chair, grabs the key, unlocks the door to the cellar, and goes downstairs. She comes back quickly, leaves the cellar door open.*

*Dragana enters.*

*Dragana*
These people really have no... I mean they just don't know... A great profession I chose.

*Tina*
Where's Darko?

*Dragana*
Imagine, they called me in this late, only to... Why is, Tina, why is the cellar door open?

*Tina*
What were you doing in the hospital?

*Dragana*
Why is it open? Tina. The door.

*Tina*
I went down there. I wanted to see.

*Dragana*
Didn't we agree... Tina, why do you do this? Why do you... *Goes to the cellar door, slams it so hard it nearly falls of its hinges.*
Why do you do this? Explain yourself.

*Tina*
Mom, what were you doing in the hospital? You never work this late. And Miša told me that Darko is off to another fight, so where is he? Did he get shot, tell me?!

*Dragana*
Why do you keep making stuff up? I'm asking you if there is something you don't understand in this, I think it's fairly understandable, language I'm speaking, or is there some other problem? Don't you, I mean, don't you... I really, Tina, I really don't, I'm struggling to understand why you can't do what I tell you, when I tell you that this door, Tina, this door must always be...

*Tina*
I know, mom.

*Dragana*
This door must always, always be closed. Locked, they should be locked. We should, you and I should make sure it is so. Wanna help me with this? Promise me we will, promise me you and I
will make sure, together, that this door always remains closed and locked, it should always be locked.

**Tina**  
I promise.

**Dragana**  
I honestly don't know if you do understand what I'm telling you, it's like, I told you, like a secret assignment. A very important assignment, one of national importance.

**Tina**  
Mom...

**Dragana**  
Do you understand?

**Tina**  
Mom...

**Dragana**  
Yes, dear.

**Tina**  
Where is Darko?

**Dragana**  
He's out with his friends. Don't worry about him, he can take care of himself. If anybody can, he can.

**Tina**  
He's been shot.

**Dragana**  
Don't we have an agreement, you and I?

**Tina**  
I just know he's been shot, and you're gonna go now, and I'll be all alone again.

**Dragana**  
C'mon, get ready for sleep, you.

**Tina**  
Don't lie to me, mom. I can't take it anymore. I'm not crazy. I'm not crazy!

**Dragana**  
Honey, go to sleep.
Tina
Where are you going?

Dragana
Just go to sleep. I need to get back to work. They assigned me another shift. Go to bed, I wont be long.

Tina
Don't go, mom, please!

Dragana
Tina, I would really love to stay, if I could. Don't make things harder on me...

Tina
Please!

Dragana
What'll I do with you?

* Tina goes to her room. *
6. The flat

*Tina. Darko enters. It's morning.*

**Darko**
What the hell's up with that bitch... Dammit...

**Tina**
I thought you got shot.

**Darko**
Well, I didn't.

**Tina**
I was sitting up, all night I was sitting up in bed, awake. Dragana wasn't here, you weren't here, I thought...

**Darko**
And where is she?

**Tina**
In the hospital. They loaded her with another shift.

**Darko**
Wait, let me sit down a bit, I'm beat.

*Dragana enters the flat.*

**Tina**
I want you to promise me not to go out with Tadija again.

**Darko**
Ok, Tina, I'm sorry to have to say this, but you're annoying. You have no idea what you're talking about.

**Dragana**
Oh, you two are up already...

**Tina**
I thought you'd gotten shot.

**Darko**
Tina is bugging me, Dragana, tell her to stop it.

**Tina**
I want you to promise me!
Dragana
Don't start this early in the morning already...

Darko
They chickened out! Is it Tadija's fault they chickened out?

Tina
Darko!

*Dragana goes to the kitchen.*

Darko
*(Whispers, so Dragana wouldn't hear)* Tadija got shot, do you get it? There he was, lying on the ground, you know what they say, more dead than alive, and than that little bitch Jasmina starts blaming me, because I brought my piece, she says they did it because of me, says they chickened out of the fight because of me, that little bitch. I knew exactly what kind of assholes they were, that's why I took the piece with me. What was I supposed to do, go unarmed, so I'd be lying shot next to Tadija?

Tina
You idiot.

*Darko gets up and goes into the toilet. Dragana returns from the kitchen with coffee.*

Dragana
Why are you bothering your brother?

Tina
You just don't want to see, do you?

Dragana
What are you talking about?

*Tina gets up and leaves the room in a fury.*

Dragana
Tina!

*She sips on the coffee, than stand up, walks to the toilet and tries to go in.*

Dragana
Darko?

Darko
Yes?
Dragana
Listen, I've been working all night, I'm exhausted. I just want to brush my teeth and get some rest. C'mon out of there.

Darko
No.

Dragana
Don't make me ask you again.

Darko
Leave me alone.

Dragana
Darko, get out of there, I'm not gonna ask you again. I slaved away the night, and the last thing I need right now is your temper. Darko comes out. Why are you looking at me like that? What's wrong with you kids?

Goes into the toilet.

Darko stands there for a while, looking after her, then goes to his jacket, takes out the gun, and goes into the cellar.
7. Cellar / park

Space 1 (the cellar)

Dimitrije, Darko comes down the stairs. He stops for a moment after seeing his father.

Dimitrije
A couple of years ago I went to Finland, they took us far Norths, supposedly because of some natural wonder or other...

Darko
Dad...?

Dimitrije
As if I was ever, I mean seriously, as if I had any interest in nature... anyway, we get there, and there’s this homestead or something and a pub... Of course everybody went straight for a drink, to get drunk, but I took a walk, and imagine this, I run into Santa Claus.

Darko
Santa Claus?

Dimitrije
There was this Finnish geezer dressed in red and with a white fur collar. The guy was sitting on some log, feeding a reindeer. So I went there, started chatting with him, turns out the old guy speaks English, so I, imagine this, so I spent the next four hours talking to him, telling him about your mom, about Tina, about you, about the shit I’ve been through, and hear this, the guy just sat there, and listened to my whining for four straight hours, and then he took off one glove, patted me on my head, and gave me this...

Darko
What is it?

Space 2 (the park)

Tina walks into the park, looking for someone.

Space 1

Dimitrije
It's a badge. It says: «I’ve been a good boy this year». In Finnish. He pats him on the head, passes the badge to him, and leaves the cellar. Darko is alone in the cellar, gun in one hand and badge in the other.
Space 2 (the park)

During Tina's monologue, the light in the room is slowly fading. Tina stays alone on set.

Tina
Hey, where are you? C'mon out, please, don't be scared!
Look, I'll just sit down here, and I won't look, I'll close my eyes. Please, come on out.
Why won't you play with me? C'mon, I'll close my eyes, see?
I'll pretend I don't notice anything.
I'll pretend I don't notice anything.

THE END