

Valentin Krasnogorov

Delights of adultery

Прелести измены

Three stories for theater

Translated from Russian by MARILYN HILLMAN
and
VALENTIN KRASNOGOROV

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VALENTIN KRASNOGOROV AND HIS PLAYS

Krasnogorov's name is acclaimed by theatergoers in Russia and all over the world. His plays, which include [The Dog](#), [Premiere After Party](#), Small Tragedies, [Let's Have Sex!](#), [The Delights Of Adultery](#), Somebody Must Leave, [The Fall of Don Juan](#), Now or Never, [Ladies by Ad](#), Love Medicine, [Pelicans of The Wilderness](#), Several Hours From the Lives of a Man and a Woman, That Weak Gentle Sex, The Bride's Room, [The Cruel Lesson](#), and [Visit of a Young Lady](#), have been positively received by critics and audiences alike. The 35 plays he has written to date have been performed in more than 400 theaters.

Krasnogorov's plays have been directed by many prominent theater directors, such as Georgy Tovstonogov, Lev Dodin, and Roman Viktyuk. They are part of the permanent repertoire of many theaters, and several have been performed hundreds of times, to rave reviews. The critical assessment that "Krasnogorov's plays cross borders easily" is no empty praise: they have been translated into a number of other languages, and performed in Australia, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Germany, Great Britain, India, Mongolia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Turkey, Ukraine, the USA, and elsewhere. Plays from the Krasnogorov catalogue have received numerous awards for best drama at various international theater festivals.

Krasnogorov's theatrical mastery spans a wide range of unique talents and skills. It is the combination of biting satire, a keen sense of humor, the art of the grotesque and the absurd, tender lyricism, and a deep appreciation of human nature that makes Krasnogorov's theater pieces so sought after, so delightful, so delectable. The conflicts in his plays are beautifully balanced out by their easy yet brilliant dialogue, lively dynamics, and gripping narratives. The author's witty plots and paradoxical situations are quick to draw readers and audiences into the world created by his imagination.

In addition to drama, Valentin Krasnogorov has written novellas, short stories, and essays. His biography is included in the *Marquis Who's Who in the World* (USA), the *International Who's Who of Intellectuals* (Cambridge, England), and other publications.

One Passion and Four Walls, Krasnogorov's book on the essence of drama, has earned praise from notable figures in the theater. He is also the founder and first president of the Dramatists Guild of St. Petersburg.

SUMMARY

A trio of skillfully interconnected short plays which offer three contrasting scenes from the life of a lovers' couple. The plays may be presented either singly (as is done in the world famous Big Drama Theatre in St. Petersburg), or as a three-act play. Easy dialogue, paradoxical plot, comical, sometimes farcical situations, and dramatic skill keep audience spellbound until the last word of the play. DELIGHTS OF ADULTERY are staged at the very popular Maly Drama Theatre, St. Petersburg. More than 400 performances have been given to date. The story. **1. The Day after Tomorrow.** The wedding is to be tomorrow. The happy bride is in the embrace of her lover, but...he is not her bridegroom. They are to decide what to do next. **2. Delights of Adultery.** The lovers have a rendezvous in the man's apartment. **3. The Last Rendezvous.** The lovers meet again, maybe for the last time. The love and happiness are gone. Why? And who is to blame? *1 man, 1 woman . Interior .*

CHARACTERS

HE

SHE

#

SETTING

An ordinary room in an ordinary house

TIME

Contemporary

Story 1

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

An ordinary room in an ordinary house. A king size bed. On the floor, and on the chairs there are packages, dresses, boxes with purchases, etc.

HE and SHE are lying on the bed.

SHE: */Kissing him./* Do I make you happy?

HE: Yes.

SHE: Really?

HE: Yes.

SHE: I'm happy too. I just can't believe all this.

A long kiss again. Her phone rings. She euns the phone off without interrupting the kiss. The ringing is repeated. She glances at the telephone, annoyed.

I'm sick of it. Ringing today, of all days.

HE: Turn it off.

SHE: It's impossible today, you know that. */Takes the phone./* Yes? But Mama, I've said once and for all - no guests. Don't want, that's all. After all, whose wedding is this, yours or mine?

/Throws the phone./ I hate this stupid wedding routine: witnesses, taxis, photographers, champagne, wedding rings, such a big fuss, isn't it?

HE: Yes.

SHE: The wedding belongs to the two people involved, doesn't it?

HE: Yes.

SHE: But I guess, I just have to put up with it.

HE: After all, guests are not the main thing.

SHE: Yes. */Embraces him./* Love?

HE: Yes.

SHE. Very very much?

HE: Very very much.

SHE. And I love you.

/A long kiss. Phone call./

HE: The hell with it! Turn it off!

SHE. Not today. You know, we can't. */Takes the call./* Hello. Yes, auntie. No, I don't have time to go shopping. Not now. I'm very busy. I have so much to do. Please, don't bother me. */Puts the phone away./* Come to me.

HE: Turn it off first.

SHE. Not today - you know. Tons of calls.

HE: That's why we have to turn it off.

SHE: */After a short hesitation./* Well, do it.

HE: You have a new bed?

SHE. Have you just noticed that?

HE: No, why? As soon as I came in.

SHE. It was delivered this morning. Don't you like it?

HE: No, why? A terrific bed.

SHE. You have a strange look...

HE: My usual look.

SHE. The old one was very narrow.

HE: I see.
SHE. And this one is more comfortable, isn't it?
HE: Yes. And where did you put the old bed?
SHE. It's in Mama's room. Stop frowning, pull out the cord and come to me.
HE: What does your mother look like?
SHE. She is very beautiful.
HE: Do you resemble her?
SHE. Oh, no.
HE: But you are very beautiful too.
SHE. Really?
HE: */Embracing her./* You are so sexy. I couldn't sleep all the night. I imagined that we... */The phone rings./*
SHE: */Sighing./* Didn't I ask you to turn it off?
HE: Don't answer it.
SHE. Just this last time I will. */Takes the call./* Hello. Thank you. Oh, thank you... Yes, the dress is ready. Thank you. Bye. */To him./* Those were congratulations.
HE: I thought so. By the way, I haven't seen you in the wedding-dress.
SHE: */Lively/.* I'll try it on, if you want.
HE: Of course. And also the wedding-ring.
SHE. Sure!
/She jumps off the bed, puts the ring on and shows him her hand./
Do you like it?
HE: Isn't it too wide?
SHE. This is the style now.
HE: Then wear it.
SHE. You don't like it?
HE: I do. A ring is not the main thing, after all.
SHE. And now the dress.
/She carefully takes the wedding-dress and puts it on./
What do you think?
HE: */Impressed./* Beautiful.
SHE. And from the back?
HE: Beautiful.
SHE. Oh, I forgot my shoes! */She puts on her shoes./* And now look.
HE: Can I hold you?
SHE. No... You'll wrinkle the dress.
HE: I'll be careful. */Embraces her./*
SHE. Wait. I'll take it off. */She takes the dress and the shoes off./* And now put your arms around me.
HE: Take off the ring too.
/She takes off the ring, and he embraces her with ardor. The phone rings./
That damned phone! Why the hell is it ringing all the time?
SHE. I don't know... */She smiles./* Maybe it's jealous... */Into the phone./* Hello... Mama, I'll have time for everything if you don't call me every minute. I have no time to spare. I'm busy with something important and you keep on disturbing me.
HE: By the way, when is the ceremony?
SHE. Tomorrow. Don't you know?

HE: I do. But I mean at what hour.
SHE. At four. Why?
HE: Nothing.
SHE. I should really do something. We have so little time.
HE: First give me something to eat.
SHE. Are you hungry?
HE: No. But I like when you cook for me.
SHE. */Joyfully./* Really?
HE: Yes.
SHE. Sit down.
/He sits down at the table. She slips on a dressing-gown and begins to lay the table. He watches her./
What are you looking at?
HE: I'm admiring.
SHE. Admiring what?
HE: Your movements are tender and exact.
SHE. Don't say stupid things.
HE: I love it when you do something for me.
SHE. And I love doing something for you.
HE: Can I kiss you?
SHE. Eat.
HE: Do you know when I feel happiest with you?
SHE. There? */She nods to the bed's side./*
HE: No. It's when you are taking care of me. And "there" too though.
SHE. And I feel best when we are walking around and you are telling me something.
HE: And there? */Nods to the bed's side./*
SHE. About "there" I can't even speak.
/The phone rings. She answers./
Hello? */Her voice is changing./* Yes, darling... Oh, no, not today. I'm very busy... I... I'm hanging the new curtains... I have to baste them, to hem... Really I have plenty to do... Kiss you. */Slowly puts the phone away./*
HE: I'm not disturbing your talking, am I?
SHE. No.
HE: I can go out to the kitchen.
SHE. What for? I'll rather put the phone off. */Watches Him eating./* Is it good?
HE: Oh, yes.
SHE. Do you want some more?
HE: Yes, thanks.
/She puts another dish on the table./
SHE. And in the meanwhile I'll get busy on the curtains.
HE: Do you have to?
SHE. I have to explain what I did all the day long.
HE: Does this work really take all day?
SHE. No, five minutes, that's all.
/She sews the curtains./
HE: How fast you sew.
SHE. I always work fast. How do you like the curtains?
HE: Did you buy them together?

SHE. Yes.
HE: They are okay.
SHE. And they go with the wall-paper.
 /He is gazing at the walls./
HE: That wallpaper wasn't here yesterday.
SHE. We papered the room last night. Do you like it?
HE: It's okay. Does he already live here?
SHE. Not yet.
HE: You are really conventional, aren't you?
SHE. You wish he had already moved in?
HE: I don't wish anything. And why is his shirt here?
SHE. I bought it yesterday. Do you like it?
HE: It's okay. But I would have preferred a lighter one.
SHE. I bought a light colored shirt too. And he also needs underwear, but I don't
 know anything about underwear. Do you?
HE: A little.
SHE. Can't you pick up two or three pairs, something good?
HE: Oh sure, why not? What size does he wear?
SHE. Large, I think.
HE: He is big, is he?
SHE. A little. But I'll put him on a diet. I'll feed him vegetables.
HE: You will be a thoughtful wife.
SHE. Is that bad?
HE: It's good.
SHE. Eat.
HE: I'm eating. You cooked it for him, eh?
SHE. No, for you.
HE: So I can finish it?
SHE. Yes.
HE: And what have you cooked for him?
SHE. For him I'll start cooking after tomorrow.
HE: And what will you be doing tomorrow?
SHE. Eat.
HE: I'm eating.
 /Pause./
SHE. The bed isn't stable. Can you tighten the legs somehow?
HE: I'll try. Give me a screw driver and a hammer.
SHE. First, finish eating.
HE: I've already finished. It was really delicious.
SHE. Tea?
HE: First I'll try to do something with the bed.
SHE. Meanwhile, I'll boil some water for tea.
 /She gives him the tools, goes out to the kitchen and returns to her sewing./
 How's it going?
HE: I'm finishing.
SHE. Already?
HE: Yes...Now it's fine.
 /She goes to the bed and shakes it./
SHE. Terrific. You're great.

HE: (*Tries to embrace her.*) We should test it.
SHE. No. There's no time. Let's hang up the curtains.
HE: Good. But first my tea.
SHE. Okay.
/She brings the tea, pours it into a cup, and pulls a plate with cake towards him./
HE: What's this?
SHE. An apple cake.
HE: Made it yourself?
SHE. For you.
/He tastes it./
Do you like it?
HE: Oh, it's very good.
SHE. Really?
HE: Really. You have hands of gold. I love them so.
SHE. Only them?
HE: And all your other things too.
SHE. Take the cake with you. I'll pack it.
HE: No.
SHE. Why?
HE: I can't bring it home.
SHE. Then I'll give you the recipe for it.
HE: What for?
SHE. For your wife.
HE: She doesn't like to bake.
SHE. It's a pity.
HE: Yes, it's a pity.
/She gives him the curtain./
SHE. Hold this edge.
/They climb onto chairs and begin to hang up the curtains./
HE: And what about that underwear... Should we buy it together or do I do it myself?
SHE. I think, together.
HE: Then you'll help me to buy a bag for my wife.
SHE. Does she need a bag?
HE: I have to buy her a present.
SHE. Is it a special occasion?
HE: Her birthday.
SHE. Then it's better to buy good shoes. What size?
HE: I don't know. Seven, I guess.
SHE. That's my size. What kind of shoes does she like?
HE: Don't know.
SHE. And what color does she like?
HE: Don't know.
SHE. Well, I'll choose what I like.
HE: Thanks.
SHE. Is she beautiful?
HE: Yes.
SHE. And smart?

HE: Yes.
SHE. And you love her.
HE: No.
SHE. Why?
HE: It's a long story.
SHE. And me?
HE: I do love you.
SHE. Very very much?
HE: Very very much.
SHE. Why?
HE: I don't know.
SHE. That's not much comfort.
HE: But it's honest.
SHE. You can get down off the chair. We've finished.
/She draws the curtains and looks at them puzzled./
Do you like it?
HE: Terrific.
SHE. And the pattern?
HE: Wonderful.
SHE. It really is wonderful, but you can't see it.
HE: Why?
SHE. Because the pattern is on the other side. I've hung them up backwards.
HE: Why?
SHE. I don't know.
HE: Shall we hang them up again?
SHE. We have to. Are you mad at me?
HE: Oh, no, it's no problem.
/They hang up the curtains again./
SHE. Okay. It's pretty, isn't it?
HE: Yes.
SHE: */Kissing him./* Thank you, honey.
HE: It's no problem. How long have you known each other?
SHE. Two years. You really helped me.
HE: It's no problem. I don't understand how he could stand not living with you for so long.
SHE. Is it so difficult?
HE: Well, I can't stand one day without you.
SHE. It's because you've only known me for a week. In two years you'll manage perfectly well without me.
HE: Nonsense.
SHE. To be honest, I didn't rush into this.
HE: May be you shouldn't rush now?
SHE. I don't know.
HE: Terrific curtains.
SHE. You've already said that.
HE: Your bedroom is very cozy. But, what is that refrigerator doing in it?
SHE. A wedding-present.
HE: Why isn't in the kitchen?
SHE. No place. There is already Mama's fridge there.

HE: And what's in these boxes? Presents too?
SHE. Yes. What's matter?
HE: Nothing.
SHE. You have a strange face...
HE: My usual face.
SHE. Do you want to see the presents?
HE: Yes, of course.
SHE. Well... I think there is a set of tea cups and saucers in this box. */She opens a box./* Yes, tea cups. */She gets out a cup and a saucer./* Here it is.
HE: Terrific tea cups. By the way, every time I forget to ask you: why are you marrying him?
SHE. There is china in this box too, but it's dinner plates. Here, look.
HE: Terrific china.
SHE. English. Don't you know why a woman gets married?
HE: Because she is in love, I guess.
SHE. Did you marry for love?
HE: Yes.
SHE. And what happened?
HE: A great plate. What's in the next box?
SHE. A doll.
HE: What a strange wedding present.
SHE. But this doll is fabulous. */She takes it out of the box./*
HE: So tell me why a woman gets married.
SHE. To have a husband and children. Look, what an adorable doll!
HE: A terrific doll. Do you want to have children?
SHE. Of course I do.
HE: Do you want them in general, or just his?
SHE. She shuts her eyes and says "Mommy". */She presses the doll to her breast./*
HE: A terrific doll. I asked you - in general or from him?
SHE. Neither.
HE: How then?
SHE. Think a little.
HE: */Stunned./* You are crazy.
SHE. Yes, I am.
HE: And I really love you for that.
SHE. And I love you. */She continues to look through boxes and bundles./* What else? Something for the kitchen I think. Forks, spoons, knives...
HE: Very practical. I'm going to say something very trite, but true...
SHE. And an apron too. */She demonstrates the apron./*
HE: A very pretty thing. ...One can't marry without love.
SHE. Why without love? He loves me.
HE: It doesn't matter.
SHE. But it's the main thing.
HE: Don't count on a stranger.
SHE. Why a stranger? He is very dear to me.
HE: As a brother.
SHE. As a husband. For two years.
HE: You won't be happy with him.
SHE. If I hadn't met you I would have been.

HE: Do you love him?

SHE. He's a good match for me.

HE: Do you love him?

SHE. I love **you**.

/Pause. She diligently and aimlessly moves the boxes from one place to another./

HE: Maybe you could stop messing around with the boxes?

SHE. Boxes?.. Oh, sorry.

/She gives him a picture which she finds in her hands./

HE: One more present?

SHE. Yes... Please hang it up on the wall.

HE: So tomorrow night you'll be with him.

SHE. Yes.

HE: And all the rest of the nights too.

SHE. Yes.

HE: It's absurd and disgusting.

SHE. And what do you suggest?

HE: Nothing. */Hanging up the picture./* Look, is it straight?

SHE: */Not looking at the picture./* Yes. Suppose I don't marry him. Then what?

HE: I don't know.

SHE. After all I'll do whatever you say.

HE: You have to decide by yourself.

SHE. Then I've already decided.

HE: Fine.

/Pause./

SHE. A beautiful picture, isn't it?

HE: It's really terrific.

SHE. Take it off please.

HE: Why?

SHE. Because I asked you to.

/He takes off the picture./

Now take away the curtains.

HE: Why?

SHE. Just do it please.

HE: Then why did we hang them up?

SHE. I forgot.

HE: Forgot what?

SHE. That the room is not for us.

HE: Who is it for?

SHE. Not for you or for me.

HE: But why not for you?

SHE. Mama doesn't want us to live here.

HE: Mama doesn't like him or he doesn't like Mama?

SHE. You see, Mama is very good...

HE: And he?

SHE. He's very good too.

HE: But these good men don't want to live together.

SHE. Yes. But that is not the issue. I want my own apartment too.

HE: You want to live a life of your own?

SHE. Yes. Is that bad?

HE: It's good.

SHE. Would you help me to look for an apartment?

HE: Of course. But why won't you do it with him?

SHE. He's very impractical.

HE: So am I.

SHE. Are you refusing?

HE. No.

SHE. Does your mother-in-law live with you?

HE: No.

SHE. Are you on good terms?

HE: Everything's okay.

SHE. And with your wife?

HE: Everything's okay there too.

SHE. You and her, do you live apart too?

HE: No, together.

SHE. It's a pity.

HE: Yes, it's a pity.

/Pause. They take down the curtains./

SHE. All of a sudden the room seems so uncomfortable.

HE: Yes.

SHE. And all cluttered up.

HE: Yes.

SHE: */Wearily/* I should straighten up. Mama will be back soon.

HE: Already? How fast the day went by.

SHE. Yes. Please push all these boxes somewhere.

HE: Why do you hide the phone in the fridge?

SHE. I don't know. Excuse me.

HE: By the way, it hasn't rung for a long time. Did you notice?

SHE. Oh, I forgot! I pulled out the cord!

/She turns the phone in, and immediately it rings. She answers./

Yes, darling. No, I already told you, don't come today. I'm so tired... Don't be sad, we have a whole life ahead of us... Oh, no, don't go to the barber, he'll make you look awful... Well, come tonight, but not for long. I'll cut your hair myself. Bye, darling.

/Hangs up./

HE: You will cut his hair yourself?

SHE. Yes. Is it bad?

HE: Oh, no, it's good.

SHE. Honey, what's the matter with you?

HE: Nothing.

SHE. You have a strange voice.

HE: My usual voice. I see you call everybody with the same names.

SHE. Not at all. He is darling and you are honey.

HE: It's the same.

SHE. You understand nothing.

HE: I always thought it was stupid to be jealous of a wife or a husband.

SHE. And what do you think now?

HE: The same.

SHE. So you're not jealous of me?
HE: I am. But he's not your husband yet.
SHE. So tomorrow you won't be jealous any more?
HE: What time do you usually go to bed?
SHE. **Usually** we haven't gone to bed yet.
HE: And what about tomorrow?
SHE: */Shrugging her shoulders./* About eleven.
HE: At eleven o'five I'll call you for a two hour conversation.
SHE. Thanks for telling me in advance. I'll put the phone off.
HE: I'll set fire to the house.
SHE. I'll call the firemen.
HE: I'm serious.
SHE. So am I... Oh, be careful, there is china in this box!
/He throws the box on the floor. Crash of the broken china./
What's the matter with you?
HE: I want to smash everything into small pieces, and you ask me to be careful while cleaning up your little love nest! You're so insensitive. I wouldn't be surprised if you send me to a drugstore to buy for you...
SHE. What?
HE: Nothing. I hate your thoughtfulness, your haircutting, your wedding rings, and your cakes.
SHE. I know, honey.
HE: Don't call me honey!
SHE. Okay.
HE: You are a sober, calculating female.
SHE. I know.
HE: And I can't stand calculating females.
SHE. I know.
HE: You have only one goal: not to be an old maid.
SHE. You want me to be an old maid?
HE: I want nothing. The most ridiculous thing is that you're so pleased with this wedding.
/She stays silent./
You give me only the dregs. But I don't need them!
/She keeps silent./
Your husband will be cut and tended as a lawn, and me... Why the hell are you so silent all the time?
SHE. What's there to say? One can't undo our knot with words.
HE: Aren't you holding one perfect trump against me? Play it!
SHE. I'm not playing cards with you.
HE: Tell me I already have a family and thus you have no alternative.
SHE. What for?
HE: Tell me if I sleep with my wife you can sleep with your husband.
SHE. What for?
HE: Get me where it hurts!
SHE. But I don't want to hurt you.
HE: Why don't you demand that I abandon my family?
SHE. You want me to demand that?
HE: I want nothing.

SHE: */Slowly/* Too bad you want nothing.
HE: I wanted. I did want a lot. I hoped all day long that you would say: "I can't".
That you would say: "I would rather be single for life."
SHE. And what then?
HE: Then I would abandon everything too. But for you a bird in the hand is worth
two in the bush. You want to live with one, but have another too. Don't
you?
SHE. Yes.
HE: I should desert my family without thinking about it for a woman, if I were the
only man in the world for her. But you won't even postpone your wedding.
Not even for one day.
SHE. I'm ready to leave him and you know it.
HE: Yes, but only for higher quality merchandise immediately.
SHE. But honey...
HE: Don't call me honey!
SHE. Why?
HE: Because I hate everything about you.
SHE. I know.
HE: You are a bitch, an ordinary bitch.
SHE. I know.
HE: I could not sleep last night - I hated you.
SHE. I know.
HE: I'm glad I've seen the real you so soon.
SHE. You thought I was a heroine or a saint?
HE: I thought nothing.
/Exhausted, he falls silent. Pause./
SHE. Everything's so simple. A week before my wedding I had learned for the
first time in my life what love is and what a man is. And that man is not
mine. And I lost my head. And I don't know what to do.
/He keeps silent./
How much time do we have, you and me? A few days more? A few
minutes?
/He keeps silent./
But I have my life ahead of me. A whole life. And I have to think about it
and arrange it. Who will if not me?
/He keeps silent./
The rings are bought, the dress is ready, the invitations are sent, all the
relatives are here already... I myself can't stop it... And I don't know what
you want. Help me.
/Pause./
Why are you so silent?
HE: I'm thinking how happy we could be.
SHE: */Bitter./* Yes.
HE: And how we ourselves will ruin everything.
SHE. Yes.
HE: Do you regret that we met each other?
SHE. No. And you?
HE: No. I love you so much.
SHE. I know.

/Pause./

SHE. Mama may come any minute. It's time for you to go.

HE: What have you decided?

SHE: */Wearily./* Nothing.

HE: */Standing up./* Bye.

SHE. Wait a little! Five minutes more!

/She embraces him./

Don't hate me because I asked you to help with the curtains and...

HE: I don't hate you.

SHE. I love doing things with you.

HE: Me too.

SHE. All the time I imagined that we did all this for us: for you and me.

HE: I didn't realize. Sorry.

SHE. Goodbye, honey.

HE: Shall we see each other again?

SHE. You think it makes sense?

HE: No.

SHE. One more time won't help and also won't solve anything.

HE: I know.

SHE. Then why to see each other?

HE: You are right. But I can't live without you.

SHE. Me either.

HE: So, till tomorrow?

SHE. Tomorrow, it's impossible, you know that.

HE: Then after tomorrow.

SHE: */After a long hesitation./* Good.

HE: You think we can do it?

SHE. I'll invent something. Love me?

HE: Very very much.

SHE. And I love you.

/Pause./

What are you thinking about?

HE: So many things...

SHE. And me - I'm only thinking about one thing.

HE: What is it?

SHE. The day after tomorrow.

THE END
of "*The Day After Tomorrow*"

Story 2

DELIGHTS OF ADULTERY

/A man is nervously walking to and fro along the room, throwing looks at the watch. Evidently, he is impatiently waiting for somebody. A sound of the opened door. A woman rushes in. She has her coat on. There is a big shopping bag in her hand. He throws himself to her. He looks hurt and at the same time happy./

HE. At last!

/A long kiss./

I've already lost the hope.

SHE. I've lost the hope too. It was so hard to escape.

HE. Why are you panting?

SHE. Was running all the way. You know, we have so little time.

/She wants to embrace him./

HE. */Moving away./* Have you locked the door?

SHE. Oh, no. I've forgotten. */Wants to embrace him./*

HE. */Moving away./* Wait. First I'll lock. */Locks the door, checks it carefully, comes back and wants to embrace her./*

SHE. */Moving away./* Wait. I've met a man on the stairs. He looked at me in such a way... I didn't feel quite myself.

HE. */Anxious./* What kind of man? An old chap with a stick, in a pajama?

SHE. No. Without stick, in a sweater.

HE. Did he saw you enter the room?

SHE. No. I pretended to go up the next floor.

HE. */Relaxed./* Then there is nothing to fear. */Wants to embrace her./*

SHE. */Moving away./* But he seemed to recognize me.

HE. Why do you think so?

SHE. My husband said his fellow-clerk lived somewhere in this district.

HE. A hundred thousands people live in this district.

SHE. And everybody can recognize me.

HE. Do you know this fellow-clerk by sight?

SHE. Yes.

HE. It was he?

SHE. No.

HE. Then why on the earth are you frightened?

SHE. And what if it was another fellow-clerk? Which knows me, and I don't know him?

HE. Then you should fear every man on the street. And every woman.

SHE. And I do fear.

HE. After all, it's not a crime to go upstairs alone.

SHE. It's easy for you to tell this.

HE. At a pitch, you may tell you visited your dressmaker.

SHE. Well, I'll somehow get out of it.

HE. */Drawing her./* Have you calmed down?

/A long kiss./

SHE. */Shrinking back suddenly./* Oh, how can you?!

HE. What's the matter?

SHE. We are standing right near the window!

HE. It looks on the river and we live on 35th floor.

SHE. It doesn't matter. I have a feeling that everybody watches us.
/He draws the curtains and embraces her./

HE. Do you have any feelings now?

SHE. No.

HE. */Moving away./* Maybe, you will at last take your coat off?

SHE. No, darling. I've come only for a minute.

HE. */Annoyed./* Why for a minute? We were going to pass together a whole hour.

SHE. The situation has been changed.

HE. Again? And I waited for this meeting so much.

SHE. So did I.
/He embraces her. She responds to his embraces but suddenly pushes him away./

SHE. */Frightened./* Have you bought the meat?

HE. Yes.

SHE. And the milk?

HE. Sure.

SHE. */Relaxed./* And I've been frightened that you had forgot.

HE. No, I hadn't. By the way, let us put all the things into your bag right now. Otherwise, we can forget them.
/He gets out of the refrigerator a piece of meat and a few bottles of milk./

SHE. How much is the meat? I mean, in the case if my mother-in-law asks about it.

HE. Twenty three and forty.

SHE. */Giving him money./* Thank you.

HE. */Giving back the change./* Don't mention it.
/She loads her shopping bag with the food./

HE. Anyway, you will maybe put your coat off?

SHE. No, darling. I've come only for a minute, you know.

HE. When must you go?

SHE. Let's calculate together. Suppose as if I'm bying the meat and the milk.

HE. */Cheerfully./* It gives an hour.

SHE. Yes. But subtract the time for the way here and back - and nothing's left.

HE. */Annoyed./* I can't understand why are you in such a hurry.

SHE. I have to cook.

HE. But it was your mother-in-law who always cooked for you.

SHE. And now I cook myself.

HE. Why?

SHE. Lest my husband should notice that I treat him not so well as before.

HE. I supposed you had taken the day off in order to meet me, and not to cook a dinner for your husband.

SHE. I supposed so too, but my mother-in-law does not like me to go out for a long time. She's very suspicious.

HE. And your husband?

SHE. He's too. I had taken my shopping bag yesterday, and he looked at me so, smiled and asked: "Going for shopping?" My heart almost stopped.

HE. And in fact, where were you going?

SHE. For shopping, where else? */Takes her bag./* Well, I must run.

HE. You could make your cooking in the evening.
SHE. In the evening I go with my husband to a football game.
HE. To a football game?! You? Why?
SHE. Lest my husband should notice nothing.
HE. You had better make a show that you go to visit Natalie.
SHE. Now I don't visit my friends.
HE. Why?
SHE. Lest he should notice nothing. As a matter of fact, I do now my best not to strain our relations.
HE. */Not looking at her./* What else do you do lest he should notice nothing?
SHE. Are you jealous, or what?
HE. No. I'm just tired of talking about your husband.
SHE. You might find another subject.
HE. What, for example?
SHE. Formerly we spoke about music, poetry...
HE. By the way, I managed to buy a rare book of old poetry for you/
SHE. Oh, come! Thank you! */Takes the book with joy, but then hesitates./* No, I can't take it. */Returns the book./* He will ask, where I've got it.
HE. You may say, it's Natalie's gift.
SHE. She may blab out.
HE. */Throwing the book./* Well, we had a good talk about poetry.
SHE. Don't be angry.
HE. I am not angry. But it hurts me that we read nothing together, never go around...
SHE. You think it doesn't hurt me? */After thinking a while./* I have an idea. Let's go to movie. Together.
HE. When? And how?
SHE. It's very simple. We'll buy the tickets for the same show. But, of course, for different seats. I'll go with my husband, and you - with your wife. And let's think that we are watching the movie together. Good?
HE. */Sighing./* Good.
SHE. Embrace me.
HE. At first take off this cursed coat.
SHE. But I've come only for one minute.
HE. I don't want to embrace you one minute. And in a coat. Not for this slipped I away out of my office for all the day long.
SHE. */It dawned upon her./* Look, do you have cabbage?
HE. Cabbage? I don't know. It seems there is one head. Why?
SHE. If you give me it, I'll say to my mother-in-law that I to another storey to buy the cabbage too. Then we'll have a plenty of time - fifteen or twenty minutes! A good idea, isn't it?
HE. It's great!
/Finds a cabbage-head and gives it to her. She puts it into her bag. Suddenly he changes his mind./
HE. No, I can't give it to you. */Tries to get the cabbage-head out of her bag./*
SHE. Why?
HE. What shall I say to my wife? I haven't been at home, but the cabbage-head disappeared. */Puts the head back into the refrigerator./*

SHE. Well. Then I'll tell at home that there was no good meat in our shop and I had to go to another. Thus we can gain the same twenty minutes.

HE. */Brightened./* Now you are talking sense!
/Embraces, kisses./

SHE. */In a passionate whisper./* Borya, darling!..

HE. */Annoyed./* I'm not Borya, I'm Tolya.

SHE. I know. But it's more convenient for me to call you Borya.

HE. Why?

SHE. I awfully fear to make a slip in speaking and call him Tolya. And that'll be a disaster.

HE. You are too nervous.

SHE. And if you are Borya too, I'll never mix you up. Okay?

HE. Well, if you do want it...

SHE. Thank you, Tolya.

HE. */With emphasize./* Borya.

SHE. Oh yes, sure. Borya. Are you offended?

SHE. */Dryly./* No.

SHE. Then embrace me heartily.
/He embraces her. Her eyes are closed, she whispers./
Borya, my sweet Berry, my dear Barberry...

HE. */Moving away./* Whom are you thinking of - him or me?

SHE. */Opening her eyes./* Of you, sure. I simply try to get accustomed to your new name.

HE. It's hard to believe in that.

SHE. Don't be jealous. I'm happy now - it's the main thing.

HE. But I am not happy.

SHE. Why?

HE. Because I want to embrace you and not your coat.

SHE. Oh dear me! Why didn't you tell me about it before? I've quite forgot about it! */Throws her coat off./*

HE. */Embracing her./* At last.

SHE. */Passionately./* Borya, darling! My sweetheart!

HE. Don't speak so loud. The neighbors below hear every word.

SHE. */In a whisper./* Good. I'll keep silence. */Almost inaudibly./* Do you love me?

HE. What?

SHE. I ask - do you love me?

HE. Ah... Yes.
/Their embraces, which hardly began, are interrupted by a sharp phone ring./

SHE. O God!
/The telephone continues to ring./

HE. Deuce take it!
/The telephone ring is repeated./
To answer or not to answer? This is the question. What's better?..

SHE. Better not to answer. And what if it's your wife?

HE. Yes... */Wants to kiss her but changes his mind./* On the other hand, I asked the boys to call me if the boss notices my absence. */He wants to answer./*

SHE. And if it's she?
/They both look at the phone as a rabbit at a snake. The ringing stops./

HE. It's over. */Wipes his forehead and puts his hand on his heart./*

SHE. Thank God! */Embraces and kisses him again./*

HE. No, it was not my wife.

SHE. You think so?

HE. Yes. She's just sure, I'm not at home.

SHE. Maybe, she had at first called to your office?

HE. She would be answered, that I had gone out for a minute.

SHE. */Embracing him./* Give up thinking of it.

HE. */Paying no attention to her./* Who could it be?

SHE. */Impatiently./* Do embrace me!

HE. Wait a minute. */Dials a number./* Tony? It's me. Everything's Okay? Did you call me right now? Well, bye-bye. */Replaces the receiver and sees astonished that she has already been dressed again./* What's happened? Where are you going?

SHE. It's time, darling.

HE. Wait just a little!

SHE. Can't.

HE. But we haven't even arranged our next meeting!

SHE. Tomorrow I can't. And after-tomorrow too.

HE. Maybe on Thursday after the work?

SHE. After the work I take my child from the nursery. Let's better meet on Friday.

HE. On Friday I can't. We are invited to a party. What about Sunday?

SHE. By weekends I don't leave my home now.

HE. Lest your husband should notice nothing.

SHE. I'm not in a mood to laugh.

HE. So am I.

SHE. The next week would be more convenient for me.

HE. */Looking at his calendar./* I fear, I'll be very busy at my office.

SHE. Till what time?

HE. Till the end of the month.

SHE. And the next month I'll be busy with my exams at dress-making courses. May be later we...

HE. Later I'll be sent to a business-trip.

SHE. For how long?

HE. Oh, I don't know. */After a pause./* Maybe we'll try to catch each other on Monday?

SHE. */Looking at her calendar./* Which Monday? The next?

HE. No. The next after the next.

SHE. I can say nothing right now.

HE. Please, let's meet. Even if for a half an hour.

SHE. Well, I'll try. Where?

HE. As for me, it would be convenient to meet in the drugstore.

SHE. It's too crowded.

HE. In the library then.

SHE. It's too empty. We'll be in everybody's eye.

HE. Maybe, in the park?

SHE. It's too far, and we have so little time. And we'll be cold there.
HE. Then let's simply take a bus and go to the end station and back.
SHE. In order that all the city would see us?
HE. Well, what do you suggest?
SHE. */After thinking a while./* Good, let's meet in the bus. But you must look in another direction, not speak to me and not sit at my side.
HE. Okay.
SHE. */Making a note in her calendar./* So, next month the fifth, at six, in the bus seven.
HE. */Making a note in his calendar./* Fifth... Six... Seven... Oh, stop! That day doesn't go for me!
SHE. But you yourself suggested it.
HE. I quite forgot that my wife would have her birthday party that Monday.
SHE. But you just celebrated it last month.
HE. It was child's, not her.
SHE. You have family holidays every week.
HE. Not every.
SHE. Can't you find a pretext to go out for a half an hour?
HE. */Thinking strenuously./* Look, can you occasionally cut one's hair?
SHE. No.
HE. It's too bad. I could tell then, that I'm going to the barber.
SHE. Suppose I can. Where could I cut your hairs? In the park? In the bus?
HE. Don't be angry.
SHE. I'm not angry.
HE. Well, I'll call you later.
SHE. You know, you can't call me.
HE. I mean, I'll call you to your work
SHE. Are you crazy? All my office will know that a man's voice calls me.
HE. What then?
SHE. They will report him.
HE. What for?
SHE. You don't know people.
HE. If you want, I'll call you in a woman's voice.
SHE. I think, Tolya...
HE. */With an emphasize./* Borya.
SHE. Oh yes... Right. Borya. Sorry. You see, how easy it is to make a slip in speaking.
HE. What were you going to say?
SHE. That you wouldn't be able to speak in a woman's voice.
HE. I will, if necessary. */In a woman's voice./* "Good morning! May I speak to..." */In a normal voice./* How was it?
SHE. */Sighing./* I'd better call you myself. To your office. But, to be candid, it's difficult for me to call freely.
HE. And it's difficult to find me in my office.
SHE. I suppose, I can leave you a message.
HE. Sure. But it would be better if it's a business-like message.
SHE. I see. To make sure, let's move the time for one day and two hours.
HE. I fear, I haven't caught.

SHE. Well, if I tell "Please tell him that the conference is tomorrow at three", then we really meet the day after tomorrow at five.

HE. */Tries to understand./* Tomorrow at five... At three... After tomorrow... I think, it would be simpler, if I send you message by e-mail.

SHE. No. He can see it in the computer.

HE. *//Looking at his watch./* Sorry, but it's time for me to run to my office.

SHE. But we haven't yet arranged our meeting.

HE. Then I'll call there to make sure. */Dials a number and speaks in a woman's voice./* Good morning! May I speak to Tony, please... Tony? How's everything there? Don't you recognize me? */Recollecting himself, in a normal voice./* Sorry, it's me, Borya! Which Borya?.. The hell! I wanted to say "Tolya"! No, I've not drunken and I'm not joking. I'll explain you later... What!! I'm missed!!! Before long?! And the boss? In a rage? I'm running. Right now. */Hangs up./* Oh God!

SHE. What has happened?

HE. I'll be dismissed for my absence.

SHE. Oh, things will settle somehow.

HE. It's easy for you to say so.

SHE. Don't be panic-stricken.

HE. The boss has a grudge against me for a long time. He'll be only glad to have a pretext to throw me out.

SHE. Well, I must ride home.

HE. We'll go out together.

SHE. No. They can notice us.

HE. It's right. You go first.

SHE. */Taking her bag./* Kiss me at parting.

HE. */Hastily kissing her./* Bye-bye.

SHE. Our life is not easy, is it?

HE. */Putting his coat on./* But it's not boring to return.

SHE. Our meetings are the only joy for me. And for you?

HE. For me too.

SHE. Do you love me?

HE. */Impatiently./* Yes. Go, go.
/She goes to the exit. A doorbell. They stop paralysed./

SHE. */In a whisper./* Who's that?

HE. How can I know?

SHE. I'm... mm...I'm trembling... with... with...

HE. Don't b... b... be af... afraid. They'll ring for a while and go away.
/The bell is repeated./

SHE. I'll go mad.

HE. Shut up! */Growing pale./* It seems, they try to open the door. Do you hear?
/A strained silence./

SHE. Go softly and look through the door-hole.
/He slinks on tiptoes to the door and comes back changed in his countenance./
Well?

HE. */Hopelessly./* It's my wife.

SHE. */Shivering./* Are you sure?

HE. */Shrugging his shoulders./* It's dark on the landing.
SHE. It's really a nightmare. */Frightened./* Can she penetrate here?
HE. No, I've locked the door from inside.
/A bell./
SHE. Oh, I can't bear it!
HE. Calm down. We must wait a little.
SHE. I can't wait. I should be at home before long.
HE. And I should be at my office.
SHE. My husband will kill me.
HE. My boss will throw me out.
SHE. She must be working now. What brought her here?
HE. I don't know. She might fall ill. Or has forgot something.
SHE. I wanted to go before long, but you couldn't stop your "wait" and "wait".
HE. It was me who hastened you, but you couldn't all of a sudden stop your twittering.
SHE. You don't have conscience. Frankly speaking I did not want to come at all. I had a foreboding.
HE. And, you think, I wanted to slip away, when my boss could miss me any moment? I knew, that nothing good would come out of it.
/A bell./
SHE. We must open. After all, we both have our coats on.
HE. We had to do it as soon as she rang. What shall we say her now?
SHE. We have nowhere to escape all the same. What to drag out for?
HE. May be she'll go out after all.
SHE. You must understand, I can't stay here any longer. */Nervously./* My mother-in-law is possibly calling to my husband now...
HE. Five years! Five years did I my best to get this position of mine - and to lose it so silly!
SHE. */Decidedly./* Open! After all, are you a man or not a man?
HE. I am a man. But I'll not open.
SHE. What are you risking? You told me yourself a thousand times that everything was finished between you and her.
HE. You too repeated me over and over again that you and your husband were strange to each other, but you tremble before him as an aspen leaf.
SHE. It's quite another matter.
HE. And it's quite another matter with me too. How shall I look her in the face now?
SHE. Oh, you are conscience-stricken! */Laughs./* Isn't it a little late?
HE. I was always conscience-stricken. I am not you!
SHE. If you fear so much, I'll open the door myself. */Decidedly goes to the exit./*
HE. */Grasping her./* Stop!
SHE. Coward, a miserable abject coward!
HE. Maybe all my life is ruined now, and you're thinking only how to run quickly to your wretched mother-in-law.
SHE. And you're shivering before an old ugly woman, with which you had to divorce a hundred years ago.

HE. This "old ugly woman" is, firstly, five years younger than you, and, secondly, by twenty times more beautiful. Near her, you look like... like a greensick toadstool.

SHE. Why then did you begin to make love to me?

HE. Firstly, for a diversity, and, secondly, by foolishness.

SHE. If you only knew, how I hate you now!

HE. And *I* hate you even more.

/Pause./

You know, there are no bells for a long time. Have you noticed?

SHE. Yes. */With a hope./* Maybe she has left? Look through the peep-hole. */He slinks to the door and comes back brightened./*

HE. There's nobody there.

SHE. What a happiness! */Throws herself on his neck./* Don't be offended, good?

HE. And you don't be offended too.

SHE. Can we go now?

HE. Sure. I must only put things in order. By the way, didn't you occasionally forget here your lipstick or something of the kind?

SHE. No. I've checked this.

HE. Maybe in the bathroom?

SHE. I haven't been there.

HE. Good. Do you remember where was this cushion?

SHE. Just where it is.

HE. Are you sure?

SHE. Yes. We didn't touch it. Now hide this book of poems.

HE. */Picks up the book./* And I nearly left it here!

SHE. Oh, and open the curtains.

/He opens the curtain.../

Stop. It was just so. */Examines the room./* Yes, everything's OKay now. */Taking her bag./* I'm running.

HE. Bye-bye.

SHE. We'll arrange our next meeting later.

HE. Yes.

SHE. Open the door.

/They hurry to the exit, but a long, insisting bell stops them. And in the same time the telephone starts ringing. Confused and desperate, they look at each other./

T H E E N D
of "*Delights of Adultery*"

Story 3

THE LAST RENDEZVOUS

/A usual room in a usual house. A young woman is laying supper. A doorbell. She goes calmly to open the door and after some time comes back followed by a man. He is bringing with him two heavy bags with shopping./

- HE. I've bought everything you asked except the cheese you like. Couldn't find.
- SHE. */Kissing him to his cheek./* Thank you. Put this into the refrigerator please. But first put on slippers. I've just polished the floor.
/He takes off his shoes, puts his legs into the slippers and begins to load the refrigerator./
Shall we have our supper at once, or do you want to have a little rest?
- HE. I'd like better at once. Don't know why but I grew hungry.
- SHE. Then wash your hands.
/He goes to the bath-room. She lays the table./
Are you ready?
- HE. Yes.
- SHE. Sit down.
/He takes off his coat and tie and sits down./
How do you feel today? A little better I hope?
- HE. No. But not worse.
- SHE. How is it on your work?
- HE. The same.
- SHE. */Giving him a food/.* You look not to cheerful.
- HE. As usual.
- SHE. A glass of wine?
- HE. Yes, thank you.
- SHE. */Takes out a bottle/* Bring a corkscrew, please.
- HE. It's in the kitchen?
- SHE. Yes, at the usual place.
/He brings the corkscrew. She puts a glass on the table./
- HE. */Opening the bottle/* And how is everything with you?
- SHE. Oh, nothing interesting. A little tired. Worked all the day long.
- HE. */Wants to pour out the wine/* And where is your glass?
- SHE. I'll not drink.
- HE. Why?
- SHE. Don't want.
- HE. What's the matter?
- SHE. It's nothing.
- HE. Honest?
- SHE. */Smiling/* Yes, dear. Everything's fine.
- HE. Then I'll give you a drop. */Takes a second glass out of the cupboard and fills it./* What are we drinking for?
- SHE. */Raises her glass/* For you. Be happy.
- HE. Agreed.
/He drinks. She puts the glass with the untouched wine on the table. He begins to eat with appetite./

My favorite salad.

SHE. I know. Do you like it?

HE. Oh yes.

SHE. I'm very glad. */Gives him more wine./*

HE. */Raises his glass./* And now for you. Be happy, darling.

SHE. Good.

/He drinks. She leaves her wine untouched./

May I give you the steak?

HE. Certainly.

/She puts a dish before him./

What's new?

SHE. The dress.

HE. Yes? And I didn't even noticed.

SHE. I knew that you would not notice it.

HE. Come, stand up.

/She stands up./

Turn round, please. Great! Congratulations! It's of course a very important news.

SHE. There is one more. We'll have a child.

HE. Yes? It's very important too. */Stops chewing./* Wait a little... Repeat please.

SHE. */Smiling./* Didn't you hear?

HE. We'll have a child?

SHE. Yes.

HE. Really?

SHE. Really.

HE. */Brightened./* But it's wonderful! */Rushes to her, takes her into his hands and turns her around the room./*

SHE. */Laughing/* Let me go!

HE. Not for the world!

SHE. You're crazy! Be careful!

HE. */Stops and lets her down./* Excuse me. I've quite forgot that you should be now treated carefully.

SHE. Not me, but my dress. As to me, you may still not to spare me.

HE. Have you visited a doctor?

SHE. Not yet.

HE. But is it for sure? Have you not made a mistake?

SHE. No. Are you glad?

HE. Sure! And you not?

SHE. Eat. The steak will get cold.

HE. Really we have to drink on this occasion. */Pour out the wine./*

SHE. Drink.

HE. Let's drink together.

SHE. I can't now.

HE. Oh yes... Sure. Then I'll not drink too. */Puts his glass./* Whom do you want, a boy or a girl?

SHE. And you?

HE. A boy, sure! You know how much I want a son. How much do I want a son!

SHE. */Smiling./* Well, let it be a boy.

HE. And let him resemble me.
SHE. Boys usually resemble their mothers.
HE. I know. But you will try your best, won't you?
SHE. I will. Are you really glad?
HE. I'm happy! I love children so much!
SHE. Yes, I know.
HE. When you are conscious that one more part of yourself is appearing in this world... It's really great.
SHE. Yes, that's great.
HE. All my life I wanted a child from a woman which I love.
SHE. */Smiling./* Then your dream won't come true so quickly.
HE. Why?
SHE. First, you should fall in love with somebody, and secondly contrive not to cease to love her for at least nine months.
HE. It's a mild reproach?
SHE. No, just a joke.
/Pause./
SHE. A cup of tea?
HE. Yes, thanks.
SHE. A very strong, as usual?
HE. This time no. I sleep bad and without this.
/She makes the tea. He throws a look at his watch./
You have to go home, don't you?
HE. Not yet.
SHE. If you have to, you had better go. I don't want you to get nervous because of me.
HE. I let my wife know that I would be late.
SHE. She's still at home with the sick girl?
HE. Yes.
SHE. If you want we can go together to a pharmacy or to make shopping.
HE. I've already bought everything. Thanks.
SHE. */Giving him the tea./* Here you are.
HE. Thanks.
/He drinks his tea. She cleans the table./
What are you going to do?
SHE. What do you mean?
HE. I mean... With the child.
SHE. Nothing. Do you want me to do something with it?
HE. No, I've just asked.
SHE. Don't worry. These problems are mine, not yours.
HE. The thing is not whether I worry or not.
SHE. I didn't want to tell you at all.
HE. It couldn't be concealed, anyway.
SHE. Oh, I don't know... For one or two months more you would notice nothing.
HE. And then?
SHE. Nobody knows what will be then.
/A long pause./
Do you begin to become thoughtful?

HE. You don't?
SHE. I became thoughtful long ago.
HE. And what have you come to?
SHE. May I take the bottle away?
HE. I don't know... Let it be here.
SHE. Maybe I'll give a lemon and a cake to the wine?
HE. No, thank you. Give, though. No, don't. I really don't know... A devilishly complicated question.
SHE. You mean the lemon?
HE. No, not the lemon.
SHE. It seems, you became sad too.
HE. Maybe.
SHE. It's my fault. Excuse me please.
/Pause./
HE. Does he know?
SHE. No.
HE. When will you tell?
SHE. */Throwing a bitter look at him./* Well, he is now coming back from the vacation... After that I'll wait some time and then tell.
HE. It's interesting, how he'll take it.
SHE. Don't know. I think, he'll be glad.
HE. Won't it look strange to him?
SHE. I'll have to do so that it won't look strange.
HE. Thank you for the information. */Having darkened, drinks wine./*
SHE. Do you want me not to do that?
HE. I want nothing. But you could spare me the unnecessary details.
SHE. And you could spare asking me about them.
/Pause. She begins again to clear the table./
HE. Rest a while, I'll do it myself.
SHE. No dear, it's you who needs a rest.
HE. No, no, let me help you.
SHE. If you want so... */Sits down on the sofa./*
HE. We have to buy things for the child. What about tomorrow?
SHE. Don't hurry. Anything may happen.
HE. You've just decided to undertake nothing.
SHE. I've decided nothing.
HE. Where will its bed stand?
SHE. I did not yet think about it.
HE. Near the window. It's a best place.
SHE. There is a draught near the window.
HE. But much light for it. The child needs the sun. Yes, this is a right place. Come, look.
SHE. What for? I don't even know whether I'll live here or not.
/A short pause./
HE. Do you want to part with him?
SHE. Do you want me to live with him for ever?
HE. Shall I bring the dishes to the kitchen?
SHE. Let it as it is. I'll clear up later.

HE. It'll be not easy for you to live alone.
SHE. Thanks for frankness.
HE. Well, you understand my problems.
SHE. Don't worry. I'm not going to divorce you from her.
HE. Any serious step must be thought over thoroughly.
SHE. I can't live with him any more.
HE. You told he was a good man.
SHE. He's perfect. But I don't love him.
HE. It occurs sometimes.
SHE. And, what's much worse, I love another man.
HE. It may be over.
SHE. Not with me.
HE. Don't let drop the glass.
SHE. I thought I should suggest him to part at once when he comes back. Now, he comes back tomorrow.
HE. And what will you tell him?
/Pause./
SHE. Let's make the injection.
HE. Maybe not today?
SHE. Why? We must strengthen your nerves.
HE. I don't put much faith in it.
SHE. If they have been prescribed we'll make them. You must be healthy.
HE. Injections can't cure the conscience.
SHE. Oh, you have a guilty conscience?
HE. Sure.
SHE. It's interesting why.
HE. I'm destroying your life.
SHE. Don't tell nonsense.
HE. These are quite reasonable words.
SHE. I'm a grown up.
HE. And what?
SHE. I myself am destroying my life.
HE. If not me, you could have a normal family.
SHE. I don't want a normal family.
HE. If not me, you did want it.
SHE. Let's not to read the tea-leaves.
/Pause./
HE. Well, what will you tell him tomorrow?
SHE. */After a long pause./* Most likely nothing.
HE. Why?
SHE. I must now decide not only for myself.
HE. Other women divorce even they have children.
SHE. You've forgot how much I earn.
HE. But he will support you.
SHE. You want me to take his money for your child?
HE. Excuse me, I've told without thinking. By the way... The child, is it mine indeed?
/She responds him with a surprised and reproachful look./

Excuse me, I've told without thinking again.

SHE. That's nothing. I've deserved such questions.

HE. Don't be angry.

SHE. Give me the ampule please. And besides where shall we live, I and the child?

HE. I think he's noble enough to leave the house.

SHE. But I'm not shameless enough to turn him out.

HE. Do you really want to make the injection?

SHE. Yes, sure. But after all, the matter is not in the money or in an apartment.

HE. And what's the matter in?

SHE. The child needs a father.

HE. In other words, you've decided not to part with him?

SHE. Do you want me to part with him?
/A short pause./

HE. I don't know what I want.

SHE. I know what I want, but what's use of it? */Brings a syringe and cotton wool and begins to prepare the injection./* Don't you mind that I talk things over with you? I just don't have with whom.

HE. Sure.

SHE. Give me please a phial with alcohol.

HE. In some way or another we have to decide somehow.

SHE. I know.

HE. We must turn over all the variants. After all, there are not so many of them.

SHE. Only three.

HE. Evidently, the first one - to continue living with him.

SHE. I should prefer with you.

HE. You understand my problems.

SHE. Frankly speaking, not quite.

HE. We discussed it more than once.

SHE. In other words, this variant is not acceptable for you.

HE. At least now.

SHE. Then the last one is left - to live alone. You see, how quickly we can decide if we decide together.

HE. But we just cleared up that you can't live alone too.

SHE. There is a forth possibility - not to live at all.

HE. You are joking of course.

SHE. Of course I'm joking.

HE. Maybe it's better not to have a child in this situation?

SHE. What then?

HE. At least you may be free then.

SHE. Do you really want me to be free?

HE. I want you to be happy.

SHE. Alone?

HE. What time is it?

SHE. Do you have to go?

HE. No. Not yet.

SHE. How is it everything at home?

HE. Bad.

SHE. It means - as usual?
HE. Much worse. Scenes every day.
SHE. In such a manner she wants to attract you, doesn't she?
HE. Don't know. But the scenes - it doesn't matter.
SHE. */Filling the syringe./* And what's the matter?
HE. The main thing that she's a strange woman for me. May I help you?
SHE. No, thank you. And what can be done?
HE. Don't know. Nothing. I want howl at the moon. */Drinks wine./*
SHE. */The syringe in her hands./* I'm ready.
/He lays down. She makes him the injection./
Was it painful?
HE. Not at all. You're a real master.
SHE. Lie a little.
HE. How quickly you've learned to do it.
SHE. Don't forget to take the ampules with you.
HE. What for?
SHE. Tomorrow you can't already to come here, have you forgot?
HE. Ah, yes. But I'll not take the ampules.
SHE. Why?
HE. Who will make the injections?
SHE. Ask your wife.
HE. She can't.
SHE. Let her learn.
HE. She won't want. She is not obliged to be a nurse.
SHE. These are her words?
HE. Yes.
SHE. You may stand up. Take the ampules nevertheless.
HE. How quickly the month has passed.
SHE. Yes.
HE. And now everything will begin again.
SHE. Yes.
HE. Again there won't be a place to meet at.
SHE. Yes.
HE. And again you'll never have the time.
SHE. Yes.
HE. And again it will be impossible to call you.
SHE. And to you.
HE. When will he arrive?
SHE. Tomorrow in the evening.
HE. So, the next night you'll be together?
/She keeps silent./
To tell you the truth I'm very tired.
SHE. Me too.
HE. I'm bored with the meetings while running.
SHE. So am I.
HE. I'm bored with fearing every man in the street.
SHE. So am I.
HE. I'm tired of the double life.

SHE. So am I.
HE. I'm disgusting to myself.
SHE. Do you want me to leave him tomorrow?
HE. It's for you to decide.
SHE. And I'll do decide myself. But do *you* want it or not?
HE. I don't know.
SHE. Honey, tell me that you want it. It won't obliged you to anything.
HE. I should be glad to tell it...
SHE. Free me.
HE. You'll leave him, and then?
SHE. Whatever will be afterwards it won't concern you.
HE. It can't not concern me. After all, you will stay with nothing because of me.
SHE. Don't worry about it. Come to me once a week, and that will be enough.
HE. It will be not easy for you.
SHE. It will be fine with me. I'll be only yours.
HE. But *I* shall be not yours.
SHE. If once a week is too much for you, come every ten days. Or once a month.
As often as you want. So that I may know that you need me.
HE. And the child?
SHE. It'll be more easy for me with him, can't you understand?
HE. And more difficult too.
SHE. You only don't worry, I'll demand nothing from you.
HE. You have the right for it.
SHE. Let's not speak about rights and duties. Better tell me - do you need me?
HE. Yes. I need you. */After a short pause./* Or maybe no... I don't know.
SHE. This is the very thing I wanted to know.
HE. Are you angry?
SHE. No.
HE. You know, something is broken within me.
SHE. I know.
HE. Maybe I regard to you not so...well...as before.
SHE. I know.
HE. And I'm very tired.
SHE. You've told it.
HE. Formerly I wanted much to be with you, but felt pity for my family.
SHE. I know.
HE. Now I feel pity for nothing, but I want nothing too.
SHE. I know.
HE. The family went to pieces all the same. Both yours and mine. I'm awfully guilty towards you.
SHE. You have simply ceased to love me. So don't speak about "guilty".
HE. I haven't yet ceased to love you.
SHE. If you say "yet", it will come before long.
HE. Maybe. Don't know. I think I'm now incapable of a love. Only of a kind of a half-love. Excuse me.
SHE. What for? If is there somebody to blame, it's only myself. The main thing on the earth for me it's you. And I'm loosing you. Now I know - I had at once to

abandon everything and live only for you. And then everything were otherwise.

HE. Maybe.

SHE. Forgive me. Again I clear up our relations, and you don't like it. Do you have to go home now?

HE. I had to go long ago.

SHE. I'll come with you, OK?

HE. No, dear, you are tired.

SHE. All the same I must now go for a walk every day. Wait a little, I'll dress up.
/She does her hair near the mirror./

HE. Tell me, did it happen occasionally?

SHE. No. I wanted it.

HE. Then I don't understand you.

SHE. Bring me my shoes please.

HE. You've driven yourself into a corner.

SHE. I know.

HE. If you know, why have you done it?

SHE. You really don't understand?

HE. I don't.

SHE. It's so simple. Not long ago I've suddenly understood that I'm losing you. Already lost. A week, a month more - and we'll part.

HE. I don't see any connection till now .

SHE. Because you're not a woman.

HE. It's difficult to object against this.

SHE. How can't you understand: you will not be with me soon, but the second "you" will stay with me for ever. Isn't it a way out?

HE. You're crazy.

SHE. Even if I never see you again, we are now bounded with each other for all our life.

HE. You'll regret it later.

SHE. Never.

/Pause. He brings Her her shoes./

You know, I'll not go. I'm very tired indeed. Will you be hurt?

HE. No, sure.

SHE. My husband comes tomorrow... I must tell you...

HE. What must you tell me?

SHE. Oh, a great deal. But I don't have time all the same. You know, everything makes no sense for me now, except our meetings. You've forgotten your glove yesterday, and I was sitting all the day long my face buried in it because it kept the odor of your hand... And he comes tomorrow.

/Pause./

The only consolation that we'll have a son.

HE. Yes. But I'm not glad with it though.

SHE. Why?

HE. Because it will be not *my* son. Maybe I'll never see him.

SHE. Maybe.

HE. Never shall I take him in my hands, never will he rush to meet me, never will embrace me, tell me "father"...

SHE. Yes.

HE. He even will never know about me.

SHE. We ourselves are guilty.

HE. Yes.

SHE. You have to go.

/He puts on slowly his tie and coat./

You don't look well, dear.

HE. You either. */Embraces her./* Bye.

SHE. Don't forget about the injections.

HE. Don't raise heavy things. Take care of yourself.

SHE. Try to sleep well.

HE. Pass more time in the open air.

SHE. Farewell, honey.

HE. I've got awfully attached to you. Don't know, what will be the end of it.

SHE. Go.

THE END