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Meteorites

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for Tucké

without whom I wouldn't know a thing

“There it stands like a beautiful planetary system, everything belongs together, and only the Italian figures, like ghastly comet-like forms, link this system to a greater and more distant one. These figures ... rush fully out of the system again and resolve themselves as foreign, exotic beings ... What a marvellous idea, that you derive the practically monstrous from the theoretically monstrous – the monstrosities of the mind – so that pure nature is not burdened by it. Only in the lap of dumb superstition are these monstrous fates contrived ... Even A. is only destroyed because of her unnaturalness, her mannishness.”

Schiller to Goethe about “Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship”, 2 July 1796

starring

Cato in a snake pit

Üzüm the über-goddess of the limbo, where everyone is stuck

Udi with Roy

Roy without anything

Serösha with himself

Roy : Europa, Europa, Europa. Where was Europa before she turned into the cunt that we know her as today? The dry, vindictive cunt that she is today, where did she come from? Turkey. That's where she was before she was abducted to Crete. And she wasn't always a cunt.

Our good friend Europa used to be a traveller, above all. A princess, carried through the whole of Asia on a sedan chair. And she was a collector. She got slaves to bring to her sedan everything that she encountered on her travels. Put celestial observations and buskins, masks and formulas into the empty bellies of shells and sewed these into the inside of her robe. The seashells clacked slowly, rhythmically against the sedan and brushed against her body.

One day, a luminous bull approached her entourage. Its fur shone like a diamond, so that the collector couldn't stop herself from reaching out her hand to touch it.

The animal's head was as big as Europa herself. She was so entranced by its luminescence, she was so hypnotised, that she didn't notice that hidden behind the disguise of the animal was the highest of all gods, Zeus himself. Her hand was magically drawn to the fur. Hardly had her fingers touched the silky hair, than she pulled them back in fright, only to then sink them back into the fur. As if pulled by an invisible thread, Europa stepped out of her sedan and sat on the bull's back. Carefully Zeus crept away, sure of having captured his prey. Taking small steps at first, then faster and faster, he fled with the virgin on his back. She cried out bitterly as she came to her senses, but did not let go of the bull's horns, for fear of falling and breaking into a thousand pieces. Inside her robe, the items of her collection clacked in rhythm to the movements of the bull's hips, and cut into her skin.

Unsure of where to bring his prey, Zeus jumped with the weeping Europa into the water. With blood-red eyeballs, he carried her to a distant land where he raped her and beat her and begat her children whom she hated but did not kill, because she did not want to get her hands dirty, and she cursed everything that she gave birth to and that came from the gods. She had to give up all the shells in her robe so that she would forget where she came from and that she already had a history. She was searched; all her orifices were examined, and she knew no more shame. The contents of her shells were scattered in all directions, so that Europa – empty, with no memory – went mad. She invented her own god that only believed in itself and denied the existence of all other gods. Several times a day she fell to her knees and prayed to her

invented god and asked him to destroy all those who had done her wrong, and to inflict war and diseases upon them. She hallucinated in this way, broken inside into a thousand pieces, until she became a barren stone that nobody wanted anymore.

* * *

Roy : I find it disturbing, the way they scream.

Üzüm : I think it's cool.

Roy : Can you turn it down a bit?

Üzüm : We'll still make it into the final, then you'll see.

Roy : I can hardly wait.

Üzüm : Germany's new "summer fairy tale".

Roy: My parents once took me to a have my face painted at a street fair.

I wanted to be a tiger. The woman with the face paint painted on these whiskers, here and here. And when my parents wanted to clean the face paint off in the evening: the colour came off, but the whiskers underneath remained as red stripes. There was something in the paint. I had an allergic reaction to it and – well – anyway, I ran around for quite a while with those stripes on my face.

Couldn't get them off.

Üzüm : Aha.

Roy : I'd be careful about what you smear on your face. You never know.

Üzüm : It's organic face paint. They make sure that it's skin-friendly.

Roy : Sure. Of course.

Üzüm: Another one?

Roy : Imagine if you tried washing this flag off your face and it wouldn't come off.

Üzüm : I get it.

Roy : I don't think so

Üzüm : Must be awful.

Roy : What?

Üzüm : Does it remind you of something? All that screaming and stuff.

Roy : How ridiculous you all are?

Üzüm : Doesn't it turn you on, the way they're running?

Roy : I'd rather watch a proper porn movie.

Üzüm : You can be part of something.

Roy : Be part of a porn movie, you mean?

Üzüm : Refugees are really hard work.

Roy : Who are you calling a refugee?

Üzüm : If you're depressed, get treatment. There are therapists for that.

Really good techniques and everything.

Roy : I didn't flee.

Üzüm : But?

Roy : Left.

Üzüm : To go on holiday.

Roy : To study.

Üzüm : And then you just stayed?

Roy : Yes.

Üzüm : For love.

Roy : Something like that.

Üzüm : So you're a kind of migrant of love. Sounds better than a war refugee.

Roy : I landed here. How do you say? Arrived. I just came without a plan.

Üzüm : Now you have a plan.

Roy : Yes, so it would seem.

Üzüm : You don't have one?

Roy : Yes, yes, yes. To save the world.

Üzüm : My great grandmother cursed my grandmother for going to Germany. And my grandmother ruined her back for Germany, pumped her lungs full of chemicals and loved her daughter to death. She was very proud, this grandmother. She told me: We came here for a good life. So

live it, damn it. Don't be humble. I find it embarrassing to act as if I was here for nobler reasons.

Roy : Migrant worker and war refugee.

Üzüm : Both want a better life.

Roy : But one is forced into it.

Üzüm : The other too.

Roy : Torture.

Üzüm : So we only feel compassion for those who are tortured?

Roy : Yes. So not for me.

Üzüm : Nor for me.

Roy : Well then, we were both lucky.

Üzüm : And was it worth it?

Roy : What?

Üzüm : For love?

Roy : It's an excuse like any other.

Üzüm : I see.

Roy : We're having a good time.

Üzüm : Oh dear.

Roy : Do you know that feeling when someone is so *there*, that you have the feeling you're never alone? That you couldn't think a single thought alone, without that person being part of it? It feels as if every room, every centimetre is full of that person. And you love that person, sure, as far as I'm concerned. But you're so happy when it's quiet in your head. When that person's smell isn't in your nose.

Üzüm : Then you're just not in love.

Roy : Maybe I'll go back, join the Army of God. Did you know that Isis is the goddess of birth? And of magic. The protector of all who suffer.

Üzüm : It means nothing to me.

Roy : What doesn't?

Üzüm : I'd rather watch the match.

Roy : Outside a war is raging, and in here it's so peaceful.

Üzüm : The live screening is outside, and I'm sitting here with you.

Roy : If you want to go outside, I can keep an eye on things here.

Üzüm : I like being here. The guests drink and dance and shag in the toilets and I'm their – what's the über-goddess called?

Roy : What über-goddess?

Üzüm : In that book that you're reading.

Roy : Hera.

Üzüm : Exactly. I'm the Hera of this limbo. We watch football together, and anybody supporting the wrong team gets thrown out.

Roy : You don't want more?

Üzüm : Children.

Roy : Yes – children.

Üzüm : Forgotten already?

Roy : No, how could I.

Üzüm : Have you changed your mind?

Roy : What happens if they support the wrong football team?

Üzüm : That's a question of upbringing. I want children and a woman by my side and I want her to be there all the time. In my head and in my nose. And I want to be with her all the time. I like having someone around, lots of people. She and the children on Sunday afternoons, so that I'm never alone. And I like that she's thinking of me all the time, no matter what she's doing, buying bread or tying the children's shoelaces. And that I worry because I can't smell her.

Roy : That sounds really lonely.

Üzüm : I look at a photo of her, and then I have to look away because it hurts my eyes, because she's so beautiful. Do you know that feeling: Nothing can go wrong anymore? I'm proud of us. We've got a great plan. We're pioneers. Aren't you proud?

Cato : And thank you for giving me the strength.

Üzüm : Yes.

Cato : If I didn't know that I had you, I wouldn't do it.

Üzüm : Aha.

Cato : You're looking at me as if I'd said that before.

Üzüm : No ... I ... You know, I just don't know what you mean.

Cato : What don't you understand?

Üzüm : Just say what you want to say to me.

Cato : Which is?

Üzüm : It isn't that my breasts look great in this new push-up.

Cato : Well they do.

Üzüm : Yes they do, but that's not what you wanted to say.

Cato : Nothing will change for us.

Üzüm : Your voice will break. You'll never be able to sing again.

Cato : Could be, I don't know yet.

Üzüm : And your skin.

Cato : Yes.

Üzüm : And your bones. And your smell.

Cato : Will all break. Yes.

Üzüm : Don't joke about it.

Cato : Sorry.

Üzüm : How shall we tell the boys?

Cato : To start with, we shouldn't tell them anything.

Üzüm : Don't you think they'll notice that you're growing a beard?

Cato : Maybe they'll be pleased.

Üzüm : Is that it, do you want to be attractive to men?

Cato : I want to find myself attractive.

Üzüm : Do you want to get away from me?

Cato : You're not listening to me.

Üzüm : We have an arrangement. What about that?

Cato : It's not possible now.

Üzüm : Don't leave me.

Cato : I'm not leaving you.

Üzüm : Of course you're leaving me, we had an agreement, we promised each other something.

Cato : I need to do it now. Otherwise I'll have to leave you all if I don't do it now. Why are you crying?

Üzüm : You're not taking me seriously.

Cato : It's hard for me to take you seriously right now with your face paint.

Üzüm : Don't leave me.

Cato : Get your hands off.

Üzüm : Don't take this away from me.

Cato : Get off –

Üzüm : Put it between my legs and tell me why everything has to change.

Cato : Stop crying. You look ugly when you cry.

Üzüm : Sorry, I just want to say, I think it's good, I'm pleased, I'm pleased, it was just ... it's just ... that I was scared that you want to leave me.

Cato : Come here, stop crying.

Üzüm : No!

Cato : Come here!

Üzüm : I'm going to get your blouse full of face paint.

Cato : Then stop crying.

Üzüm : I'll do anything.

Cato : You can't. I have to do this.

Serösha enters.

Serösha : Am I interrupting?

Üzüm : What does it look like?

Cato : I'll be with you in a sec.

Serösha : What's with all the tears?

Üzüm : He should go away!

Serösha : Oh dear.

Üzüm : Piss off!

Serösha : You've got something on your face.

Üzüm : Then don't look.

Serösha : Hold still.

Üzüm : Get off me!

Serösha : I can get rid of that.

Üzüm : Are you crazy, grabbing my face like that?

Serösha : What's that? Cato, now you've got dirt on your blouse.

Üzüm : It's face paint, it'll wash out.

Serösha : It's disgusting. Look!

Cato : Leave it.

Serösha : Did you watch the opening match in that get-up?

Üzüm : I don't have to justify myself to you.

Cato : Come on.

Serösha : I'm just wondering why somebody like you would want a flag on your face.

Üzüm : Someone like me?

Cato : We're going now.

Serösha : Hang on, wait.

Üzüm : What?

Serösha : What's with that look? Are you trying to look like you belong?

Üzüm : You're the one who's trying.

Cato : Serösha, can you –

Üzüm : Do I have to have a Face-Nazi like you tell me who belongs and who doesn't?

Serösha : I don't have to tell you. But I'd like to know what your friends running around with the same flags see in you. One of them – or a clown?

Üzüm : I don't care what pricks like you think.

Serösha : Your entire get-up is proof of the fact that you don't care what others think.

Üzüm : What's he doing here?

Serösha : Great cleavage. Shouldn't you paint a flag on your breasts too? There's enough room.

Cato : I haven't got round to –

Üzüm : What?

Cato : I'll tell you another time.

Üzüm : Are you taking the piss?

Serösha : Cato is flying with me to my father's funeral. There, now you know.

Can we?

Üzüm: What do you mean with –

Cato : Serösha, wait –

Üzüm : What, you –

Cato : I wanted to. I need to go with him.

Üzüm : You what?

Cato : Need to go with him to – it's important.

Üzüm : You're running off together?

Serösha : Yes.

Cato : No.

Serösha : Now I ought to also wipe off my gob on someone's

blouse. Buhuhu, waahaaa –

I need to fly to that fucking country from where I don't know if I'll be able to return.

Buhuhu, waahaaa – Can I also –

Üzüm: You're not coming back?

Cato : Of course I'm coming back.

Üzüm : To me.

Cato : I'm coming back.

Üzüm : Does he know? Does he know about your plan?

Serösha : Do I know about what?

Cato : I'm coming back and –

Üzüm : Then I hope you both snuff it in that shithole of a country, in that
pisshole.

Cato : Fine.

Üzüm : A great big heap of shit, crapped really high, and it falls apart
and the lumps roll across Europe.

Serösha : We agree on that point.

Üzüm : And take her with you.

Cato : Him. He. Please. Him.

Udi: You tip out 20 thousand square-metres of concrete next to the Brandenburg Gate, plant little trees around the edge and add some ambient sound, so that everyone knows: here you have to be depressed, be sad, remember the dead, something like that. And they just go in, take off their T-shirts and show off their muscles to the camera.

Roy : Yeah, and?

Udi : It shows you that it isn't a place for people who want to remember their grandparents who were gassed. It's a place for the Nazi grandchildren, so that they can pat themselves on the back for having overcome everything so well, because gays can have photos taken of themselves in the Holocaust Memorial for GayRomeo with bleached teeth and a bleached arsehole.

Roy : –

Udi : You don't think it's bad?

Roy : I'm not in the mood for these kinds of stories.

Udi : Am I getting on your nerves?

Roy : Your eyes are glazed.

Udi : That's because of the light.

Roy : You can't work like that.

Udi : I can work better like this.

Roy : It's a turn-off.

Udi : When I'm stoned?

Roy : It's not good for you in that quantity.

Udi : I had another look through some ads. I think we should forget about the centre of town and look around in the north. Beyond the S-Bahn ring. I know you're not a fan, but the area is changing. Really.

Roy : Sure, I'll buy myself a pair of sprinting shoes to go with the new flat, so that I can run fast enough when the neighbours come over with baseball bats.

Udi : Don't be so bigoted. Being gay isn't what it used to be.

Roy : And having black curly hair in an area like that is still the same as what it was. Have you seen how they're reacting to the war?

Udi : "Jew Jew, coward pig, come outside and fight alone."

Roy : And you want to go there?

Udi : They sing that everywhere. So should I emigrate?

Roy : I don't know what you should do. I'm not moving to the north.

Udi : Shall we go somewhere together?

Roy : Where?

Udi : Tallinn.

Roy : Sure.

Udi : You're impossible to please. Here they're too gay for you, there too homophobic, over there too racist, and there too Arabic.

Roy : Then leave me be.

Udi : This phone isn't good for you. You keep hearing about how gays are being harassed. And then you don't want to move anywhere with me.

Roy : Would it be better if nobody did the job?

Udi : I notice it with myself. I watched the news today. I can't get it out - not just out of my head. Out of my body. They keep advancing and I think, don't you also have violent fantasies? I mean torture fantasies, when you see them?

Roy : The soldiers?

Udi : That's me on TV, do you get it? I see myself there driving a tank.

Walking through the desert, in that dirt, you don't see any uniforms anymore, just brownish green sand from your neck to your feet. I looked exactly like that, you know, that's me – Then a young boy, he can't be more than eighteen years old, stretches his hand out of the tank and makes a victory sign and laughs with crooked teeth from one side of his helmet to the other and his pimples are as big as his eyes. I imagine standing behind him in the tank holding onto his hip bones. And he would shout: Erez Israel! Our home!
We are defending the Jews' right to exist! And I would bang him until I come in him while he's shouting like that.

Roy : That's sick. You're sick.

Udi : Oh come on, don't you ever think things like that?

Roy : No.

Udi : Say it. Everyone thinks things like that.

Roy : Leave me alone.

Udi : You can say it.

Roy : Leave me alone.

Udi : It wouldn't shock me.

Roy : I have a feeling we shouldn't do anything today.

Udi : Do you know why I smoke so much?

Roy : Because you're addicted.

Udi : Because I'm sad.

Roy : I don't want to hear about it.

Udi : And when you go I'll be even sadder, then I'll smoke even more and then the police will come and arrest me and see that my papers have expired. And then you'll never see me again. Do you want that? Or I'll bring the police to our place, then they'll see that your papers aren't quite up to date either and then they'll send us both back and then we can wave to each other from one wall to another.

Roy : Are you threatening me?

Udi : Don't you want to ask me why I'm sad?

Roy : Go to the Holocaust Memorial, take off your T-shirt and see if someone comes.

Udi : Shall I?

Roy : And show your arse. To the Nazi grandchildren.

Udi : Are you pissed off with me because I'm smoking dope?

Roy : Threatening me with the police is all I need.

Udi : I'm sorry.

Roy : Yeah, screw you.

Udi : I love you. I'd like to screw you.

Roy : Shut up.

Udi : You look fantastic today.

Roy : And you're sweating. When you smoke too much, you sweat.

Udi : I'm sorry.

Roy : –

Udi : I love you.

Roy : –

Udi : Sorry, sorry. I'm a dumb, strung-out junkie and deliriously happy with you. I don't know what I'm saying.

Roy : I'd noticed.

Udi : If they see us fighting, they won't rise to the bait.

Roy : On the contrary, they'll think: cool, Arab studs who want to get off with each other.

Can't see that you're a hook-nose.

Udi : Turks, they think we're Turks.

Roy : Even better.

Udi : Slap me in the face. Then they'll come faster.

Roy : –

Udi : Come on, slap me in the face.

* * *

Cato : You have to go.

Serösha : And what if they throw me in the slammer?

Cato : I'll bring you cheese sandwiches.

Serösha : You. Come and visit me.

Cato : Why would you go to prison?

Serösha : Because I'm a cowardly mother-fucking deserter. Who's coming to spit on his father's grave, and is arrested because he's a deserter. And everyone knows what happens to deserters in this country. And it would be nice if you came by briefly before they skewer me on a broomstick. Yeah, come by.

Cato : Don't ham it up.

Serösha : His whole life, that old codger only caused problems.

Cato : You made things problematic for each other.

Serösha : Cato, why won't anyone tell me what he died of?

Cato : Because they don't know.

Serösha : The fuck they don't know. We don't live in an age in which you don't know something like that, you do an autopsy, cut open his skullcap, weigh his guts and write in the file "died of".

Cato : Then go there and do it yourself.

Serösha : I saw it on TV.

Cato : It's not like on TV over there.

Serösha : Everywhere is like on TV.

Cato : Yeah, okay. You're right and the whole world doesn't have a clue.

Serösha : He died of AIDS.

Cato : Did they announce that on TV?

Serösha : That's why they're not telling me. Because he died of AIDS.

Cato : Some of his teeth fell out, what's that got to do –

Serösha : Exactly, think about it. His immune system collapsed.

Cato : Did they say that? Did someone tell you that?

Serösha : No.

Cato : So what are you talking about?

Serösha : I know it.

Cato : It's really easy to find out. You can't cover it up.

Serösha : In Russia? I paid 35 for my driving licence, if I'd said I wanted to work as a doctor, they would have added a doctor's certificate for free.

Cato : Why should they hide something like that?

Serösha : –

Cato : Okay, but –

Serösha : Exactly.

Cato : That's bullshit.

Serösha : It's not.

Cato : I don't know if you're suffering from grief or something, but maybe you should talk about it with someone, someone professional I mean.

Serösha : High-ranking officers in the Russian army don't have AIDS.

Cato : And even if he did, what difference does it make?

Serösha : That everyone in the family knows. Except me.

Cato : We'll fly there and ask.

Serösha : Yes, exactly. The two of us. How do you picture it? Hey Granddad, by the way, was your son a faggot?

Cato : Why faggot?

Serösha : Don't take it seriously, I don't mean it like that.

Cato : So what do you mean?

Serösha : I need your help right now, and not for you to get hung up on my choice of words.

Cato : Take me with you. I'll look after you.

Serösha : You don't really believe that, do you?

Cato : –

Serösha : Do you really want to?

Cato : Yes.

Serösha : I don't want to go alone.

Cato : I really want to.

Serösha : I don't want to go.

Cato : I'm coming with you.

Serösha : And the passport controls.

Cato : They'll let me in.

Serösha : You've got a different name in your passport.

Cato : I'll travel under that name.

Serösha : You're not even allowed to drive, you know it's forbidden for people like you.

Cato : I don't have to drive a car.

Serösha : Right. You'll live longer. Do you see? They even prevent people from driving a car. Oh well. The way you drive, at least it might prolong your life.

Cato : What are you afraid of?

Serösha : How long will it take – with your voice and stuff.

Cato : My voice and stuff?

Serösha : I need to know how to introduce you to my family, what I should tell them about you, I mean, you could still come as my wife, a woman like you.

Cato : What do mean with a woman like me?

Serösha : They would just think that's the way it is in the west, that women look that way.
laughs

Cato : I'll introduce myself to your family. And then I'll ask: Hey, hello, do you happen to know whether this prick, who we're burying today, died of AIDS? I know, there is no AIDS here, that's a western gay person's disease and Russian officers are completely immune to it, but sometimes there are exceptions and so I wanted to ask, if you happen to know, if – because you know, my good friend Serösha, we're just friends, wants to know if his father – although it's neither here nor there, dead is dead, but we all want to know why we're spitting on his grave: because he was a mass murderer or a faggot?

Serösha : Stop it.

Cato : You should know, I'm also a faggot, you can say it to my face. Because you think I'm a woman, but you're wrong, I'm a woman like me, so a gay man. And I guess Serösha is too, when he fucks me.

Serösha : I don't want you to talk like that.

Cato : Your father was a dirty rat, who slit open woman and raped children. It's very likely that he had all kinds of diseases, if not from women and children, then from the drugs that they injected in order to cope.

Serösha : Shut the fuck up.

Cato : And I think that now you should go there and tell him that you're a faggot. Because the Russians are right, it's an infectious disease. It proliferates and it's hereditary. And I'll come with you and tell everyone that we're planning on having children. I won't let you go alone. Do you understand?

* * *

Roy : Nice phone.

Serösha : Thanks.

Roy : Don't worry, I'm not going to nick it.

Serösha : Thanks for telling me.

Roy : It's what some people think.

Serösha : Why?

Roy : Why not. Because I've got black hair?

Serösha : Or because you're standing a bit too close to it?

Roy : What are you drinking?

Serösha : White Russian.

Roy : It's sweet.

Serösha : And you?

Roy : Water.

Serösha : Sexy.

Roy : I'm the fox.

Serösha : Oh dear.

Roy : The wolf and the fox break into the farmer's cellar storeroom. They eat and eat until they're stuffed, and the fox keeps going to the window to check that he can still fit through it, that he can still escape. And the wolf eats and eats.

Serösha : And then the farmer comes.

Roy : With his shotgun, and turns the wolf into a rug. And the fox escapes. I need to keep checking that I can still get out.

Serösha : You're investing in the wrong one.

Roy : Is this the stock market?

Serösha : I'm not gay.

Roy : Me neither.

Serösha : No, not like that either. I'm not looking for adventure. And there isn't a bored housewife sitting at home waiting for me.

Roy : We're just talking.

Serösha : Alright, we're just talking.

Roy : Why are you so anxious?

Serösha : With you gays, isn't it always about who reinvests how much in whom, and whether it's worth it in the end?

Roy : So the stock market after all.

Serösha : Instinct.

Roy : My instinct tells me that you want to dance with me.

Serösha : That's sexual harassment.

Roy : That's where I work.

Serösha : At the sexual harassment?

Roy : At the gay harassment hotline.

Serösha : I'm not –

Roy : Then I would ask you: Are you male, are you gay, in what way were you harassed?

Serösha : There's a guy who won't leave me alone.

Roy : Is he molesting you?

Serösha : Kind of – yes.

Roy : Is he getting too close to you?

Serösha : Yes.

Roy : Do you like that?

Serösha : Forget it. I'll be gone in half an hour.

Roy : Gone where?

Serösha : To the airport.

Roy : That's why you've got the suitcase?

Serösha : -

Roy : Where are you flying to?

Serösha : -

Roy : That's a good ploy, I've never come across that one. With a suitcase in the bar.

And saying, I'm about to go. To the airport. It's good, I like it.

Serösha : I'll have one drink and then I'll go.

Roy : Are you on the run?

Serösha : I have to go to a funeral.

Roy : Oh. I'm sorry.

Serösha : Yes.

Roy : Are you flying alone?

Serösha : Yes.

Roy : Nobody should go to something like that alone.

Serösha : Do you want to come?

Roy : Yes. Will you take me?

Serösha : I'm going now.

Roy : You don't look like it, you don't look like someone who's going.

Serösha : What do I look like?

Roy : You look like someone who wants to talk.

Serösha : Can you just leave me alone, would that be possible?

Roy : I can, but you don't want me to. I can see it in your eyes.

Serösha : Are you going to come out with that "Your father must have been a thief" speech?

Roy : I don't know it, how does it go?

Serösha : Your father must have been a thief, your eyes are stars.

Roy : That doesn't make sense.

Serösha : Well, yeah, before that there's something about stealing stars from the sky, I don't know.

Roy : Wow, that's really bad.

Serösha : And what do you seen in my eyes?

Roy : Fear.

Serösha : Oh, I see.

Roy : Did you prefer stars?

Serösha : I think so.

Roy : You're very beautiful, you know that? I don't think you know. You don't look like someone who knows what he looks like. You want to hear something about your eyes? They are the loneliest eyes that I've ever seen. And I find that very attractive.

And you're afraid, and that also looks beautiful on you. And I like the way you smell.

Serösha : Okay, that's bullshit. Leave it.

Roy : Stay here.

Serösha : What?

Roy: Stay here, come with me, nobody will notice.

Serösha : I need to go to a funeral.

Roy : The deceased will forgive you.

Serösha : I can't, I've got –

Roy : A boyfriend.

Serösha : No –

Roy : A girlfriend –

Serösha : Yes. It's –

Roy : complicated. I'm sure it is.

* * *

Roy : Chaos was used to being misjudged by everyone. It didn't matter who made assumptions about him, hardly anybody dared to get really close to him, but he didn't care, because he had a calm nature and knew more than others.

Most of all he liked to smoke a relaxing hookah with his best friend Cosmos, who always contradicted him and tried to convince him of his laws of nature. Chaos smiled softly and darkly into himself and let

Cosmos have his way as he gave his self-placating monologues about the principles of gravity and weightlessness, while Chaos devoured him with his dark eyes.

And Chaos was fertile. He gave birth to Gaia, Nyx, Erebus, Tartaros and Eros – Love.

He took tender care of his offspring and stroked each of their heads before they went to sleep. But Love did not want to share the heart of Chaos with her siblings. Secretly she was jealous of every touch that was not given to her, it seemed to her as if her siblings were always rocked to sleep for longer, and hugged more tightly. She started to always fall from the swing and crawl with cut lips into Chaos' lap, so that he would

comfort her. She broke all her bones and lay in front of her parent with dislocated limbs so that he would only hear her screams, only sing to her. But Chaos saw through the child and did not treat her differently from her siblings. So one day Love ran away from home and now acknowledged Cosmos as her parent. With him she was his only child, she could establish and dictate the rule, and dream of remaining his only offspring. Cosmos took in the angry child with the broken bones and took care of it according to all the rules of gravity.

But the more Love denied her origins, the more crookedly her bones grew together. The paler and more angry and helpless her face became, the harder to comb was her hair. She no longer washed, the foam from her cut lips had dried into a scab.

Half crippled and stinking, she hobbled back and forth between the house of her parent Chaos and her new home with Cosmos, not knowing what she wanted, apart from controlling everyone she met. She threw herself on her victims, gnawed the skin from their bones, whispered and spat laws about gravity and weightlessness into their ears that she didn't believe in herself, and ran off as soon as she recognised herself in her victims' eyes.

Her weight squashed the bones of those who she threw to the ground and they could not get up again for a long time. They lay for ages with trampled limbs, always with the memory of the greedy, jealous beast and the deep bite marks that she had left behind on them.

Roy : Plane ticket, passport.

Udi : He had a cute arse.

Roy : Yeah, and a few hundred dicks have been in that arse. We can still do something with the passport.

Udi : Don't you think he was cute?

Roy : Have you fallen for him?

Udi : You're the only man in my life!

Roy : Let go, you're slippery.

Udi : But you like that.

Roy : The way you danced up to him, I thought you wanted him for yourself.

Udi : How?

Roy : Like this.

Udi : And how else?

Roy : Like this.

Udi : Suck me.

Roy : Do it yourself. I'm too hot.

Udi : Then I'll suck you.

Roy : Can you get your hands off me? I want to count. Ow, that hurts.

Udi : You're totally contorted.

Roy : Ow!

Udi : Relax.

Roy : Shit, what's that?

Udi : Don't move.

Roy : Is it lumbago?

Udi : You're getting to that age.

Roy : Can you please be more careful.

Udi : Breathe.

Roy : It hurts.

Udi : I'll lie down with you for a minute.

Roy : You smell different.

Udi : Do I stink?

Roy : Good, you smell good.

Udi : That must be enough.

Roy : Not by a long shot.

Udi : At some point it has to be enough. At some point we'll open the casket and it will emit a gleaming light. Golden. Und we'll have dollar signs in our eyes. Nah, euro signs. Enough for at least five rooms. A maisonette. Or a loft. With a roof terrace. In the centre of town. We've never talked about how many rooms you want. Do you know already? I only want one, you can have the others. Actually I don't want any rooms without you, I don't want anything without you, I want you to spread yourself out in all of the rooms, and I'll tidy up your things in order to find mine. I'd like that. To shout at you because your dirty socks are lying on my computer.

Roy : Shit, it really hurts!

Udi : I want us to choose everything together. Tiles for the bathroom. King-size bed with mirrors on the left wall, on the right a blacked-out window, so that we can stand in front of it naked and stick out our naked arses to the back yard without anyone seeing anything.

Roy : That would be expensive. Ow.

Udi : I want you to get lots of those plants that you're always talking about, so that you can water them and take care of them properly, and at some point I ruin it all, get them muddled up and drown them, because I gave them too much water, because I was so nervous because you gave me responsibility for your favourite living things. But deep down I'm probably just jealous and gave them too much water on purpose. And you'll cook the food and I'll grumble that I want to eat out. And we'll lie in bed till evening and you'll read to me and we'll fuck and won't do anything else.

Roy : Can you wait a minute.

Udi : Soon we must have enough. We'll fuck lots of boys. And when we're through with all the boys in the city, we'll start on the oldies. We'll go to old people's homes. Would that disgust you? It would me. But I would do it for you.

Roy : Can we talk?

Udi : And then the tourists. Don't forget the tourists. Every year so many come to this city, by now we really ought to have got the money together. We're too lazy. We could be more productive. How much have we got already?

Roy : I don't know.

Udi : 50?

Roy : Less.

Udi : 40?

Roy : Less.

Udi : But not 30.

Roy : Less.

Udi : Rubbish.

Roy : Less.

Udi : You know what? – If that's the case, then we'll just live a few more years in this hole. I'm going to go and count again.

Something's wrong. It's – much too little.

Roy : I took some of it out.

Udi : What do you mean took it out. For what?

Roy : My share.

Udi : Why are you taking any out, we made a deal. Not to touch this money. It's for the flat.

Roy : Not anymore.

Udi : If you need something, you don't have to take it secretly, you can tell me.

Roy : I can't go on like this.

Udi : How much did you take?

Roy : Half.

Udi : Give it back.

Roy : It's mine.

Udi : No it's ours. Give it back, it's for the flat.

Roy : I'm moving out.

Udi : No you're not. I don't believe you.

Roy : It's annoying.

Udi : It's annoying? Did you really just say it's annoying? Did you really use that word?

Roy : We can carry on earning money together. But I need room for me.

Udi : What kind of a shit room? We wanted to buy a flat and

tell our children how we earned the money to buy it. We made an arrangement with the girls. One for them, one for us. We can't break that deal.

Roy : Cato has started taking hormones. He'll be a he.

Udi : What's that got to do with ... that's – What does that mean?

Roy : It means he's dropping out.

Udi : Why?

Roy : He can't have children anymore.

Udi : But what does that have to do with us? Then we'll have them with someone else.

Roy : He'll be what he is. He's doing it now. Doesn't give a shit about anyone, about any arrangements, and isn't scared. Of losing everything. All of us. He's just doing it. I'm going now.

Udi : But you can't go. You've got lumbago. Lie back down!

Roy : We'll never save enough for the flat.

Udi : Where do you get that idea? How do you know that?

Roy : It's just not enough. It'll never be enough.

Udi : What will never be enough?

Roy : We don't have a future. It won't work.

Udi : With me?

Roy : With me.

Udi : Is it because of Cato? I can talk to her.

Roy : Him. Talk to him. And you can't talk to him. He's leaving. And so am I.

Udi : You're an absolute shit to leave me like that.

Roy : I'm a fox. I need to check that I can still get through the window.

Udi : You cripple. Look at yourself. What do you have apart from me?

Roy : Nothing.

Udi : –

Roy : That's okay.

Cato: Can I carry that? Is that okay?

Serösha : You – yes, you look really good in that.

Cato : Will you help me with the cufflinks?

Serösha : Sit down a minute.

Cato : Is something the matter?

Serösha : Yes.

Cato : What is it, why are you looking at me like that?

Serösha : Here.

Cato : What is that?

Serösha : Someone gave it to me as a present.

Cato : Just like that?

Serösha : Keep it. It's for you.

Cato : Where did you get it?

Serösha : I'm walking along the street and behind me is this old woman. And she holds out this ring to me and says, excuse me, I think this is yours. You just dropped it. And I look at it – of course I didn't drop it, but I liked it. I thought I'd take it.

Cato : Did you give the woman money for it?

Serösha : I think it's made of gold.

Cato : How much did you give her?

Serösha : Why?

Cato : Just curious.

Serösha : 10. Why? Why are you laughing?

Cato : You're easy to con.

Serösha : What do you mean? Then give it back, if you don't want it.

Cato : It's very beautiful, thank you. I want to keep it.

Serösha : Now stop laughing.

Cato : Kind of expensive.

Serösha : Are you laughing at me?

Cato : I've met so many of these women. Who find your ring. Young man, young man, is it yours? You just dropped it, such a

beautiful ring, you don't want to lose a ring like this. And you know how they earn their money? Because nobody tells the truth: that's not my ring, but thank you.

Serösha : Shit.

Cato : I'm sure she needs the money.

Serösha : Never trust anybody.

Cato : Don't think you're cleverer than others.

Serösha : I could have done with the money, too. It was my last 10. I had it in my trouser pocket.

Cato : Do you need money?

Serösha : My wallet is gone.

Cato : What do you mean your wallet is gone?

Serösha : Stolen.

Cato : What?

Serösha : Will you marry me?

Cato : What?

Serösha : What what? Will you marry me?

Cato : What?

Serösha : Can you stop that?

Cato : What do you mean?

Serösha : Here's a ring.

Cato : Yes.

Serösha : Let's get married.

Cato : –

Serösha : Say something, anything.

Cato : –

Serösha : I feel dizzy. Nothing is clear, nothing and nobody. The floor is swaying. I want it to stop.

Cato : Want what to stop?

Serösha : I need something to be stable.

Cato : And that would be me?

Serösha : My knees are shaking. My knees are shaking and my skin is itching. Here on my neck, can you see? I'm getting a rash, I want it to stop.

Cato : And why do you want to marry me?

Serösha : It occurred to me when I saw the ring. I thought, this pretty

gold ring would look great on Cato's pretty, slim finger.

Cato : And?

Serösha : I watched recordings of those meteor showers near Chelyabinsk. It must have looked like Armageddon, burning stones falling from the sky. It must have been so light. All of the car cameras recorded it. I watched one recording: burning clumps of stone hailing down onto earth, and this guy placidly driving along the road. And when a meteorite whizzes past really close to his car, he just closes the sunroof. That's it. His expression doesn't change. Eyes straight ahead, he doesn't flinch. If a meteorite flew past me? Well then, sunroof down. And keep driving. Stay on the road.

Cato : Yes, and what are you trying to say with that?

Serösha : I wish I was like that.

Cato : You'd like to be retarded?

Serösha : We're going to fly to this shitty funeral, and when we've survived that we're going to marry. We'll get married there. And I'll introduce you to everyone. And you'll wear a white dress and I'll wear a white tuxedo and we'll hire a limousine and drive much too fast through the city centre. We'll throw out the chauffeur at a traffic light and I'll drive you, and you'll sit on my lap and I won't be able to see the road anymore, because there will be white tulle everywhere, but that doesn't matter. I'll stay on the road. And you'll kiss my neck – where the rash has gone – and laugh in my ear. Don't you want that too?

* * *

Roy : Tiresias, the blind prophet, was born neither blind nor a prophet. Nor as a man or a woman. The offspring of a shepherd and a nymph, he lived as a priest of the mighty Zeus with an indefinable sexuality, until he came across a snake pit and accidentally killed a female snake. After this he became a woman, gave his notice to the highest of all gods and became the priestess of his wife, Hera. Tiresias married and had children and

could have lived happily ever after, but he was tormented by being seen only as one thing, as a woman, and so he went back to the same snake pit, and this time took out a male snake and killed it. But instead of being turned back to what he was born as, a combination of everything, he became a man.

Distraught that there was no way of going back to his original perfection as a ManWoman, the now male being left his children and his husband, wandered the earth and told people about his original state, that the division into one or the other signified a perpetual restriction, a crutch, which was the reason why humans never attained happiness and why they told themselves stories of two halves that belong together and search for each other. But what they were searching for couldn't be found in the other and those who believed it were stupid. What they were searching for were the two parts in their own bodies, those who only saw themselves as one sex were cursed to everlasting incompleteness.

The gods were outraged that Tiresias had revealed the secret of all secrets to humans. Because as long as humans were searching for another, they let the gods be, and did not bother themselves with their scheming.

But now the humans were rising up and shaking their fists at the heavens, incensed that the gods had divided them into two sexes in order to be able to control them better.

So the gods blinded Tiresias, who continued to wander the earth and tell people what he knew, because he had been born as both. Now, cursed and divided, he learnt the language of the birds and became a prophet, in order to continue telling the secret of the gods to humans.

* * *

Üzüm : Is that for a funeral or a wedding?

Cato : I don't know what they wear over there.

Üzüm : I've never seen you in a dress.

Cato : Me neither.

Üzüm : That's wrong.

Cato : I know.

Üzüm : Why are you doing that?

Cato : I just wanted to see if I, if it –

Üzüm . Can be reversed? Or was all that just to get rid of me?

Cato : I thought of having a photo taken of me in my dress and sending it to my parents. I was thinking about all those photos of me, in which this frazzled kid has to put up with being photographed in pink clothes. They just didn't care that I fought tooth and nail, that I started lashing out when they made me wear skirts. And then they would quickly take a photo and send it to my grandmother, as if to prove that I was completely normal.

Üzüm : What do you think they'll say?

Cato : One last photo before they never recognise me again.

Üzüm : I need to go.

Cato : Shall we take a photo of the two of us? You and me in dresses?

Üzüm : I don't have any time, I have to buy firecrackers. During the last match they ran out before the end. That was crazy. Not having any firecrackers left after the fourth goal, and then there were another three. The whole neighbourhood jerked off too early with excitement. Did you see?

Cato : No.

Üzüm : Okay, then –

Cato : Wait.

Üzüm : Yes?

Cato : I – Are you feeling alright?

Üzüm : What? What are you doing?

Cato : I'm trying to buy myself a lipstick. I don't know how long I've been standing in front of this shelf. The whole time I've been trying to work out which one suits me. Can you help me?

Üzüm : Why are you doing this?

Cato : Nothing subdued. It is a funeral after all. Red for sorrow. I'm going to paint my lips red, and then flags on my cheeks like you, and then –

Üzüm : Yes, and then?

Cato : Why are you wearing a dirndl, Üzüm?

Üzüm : One of the players was also wearing one of these. Just like this one.

Cato : In pink.

Üzüm : Why are you wearing a dress?

Cato : I don't understand.

Üzüm : You tell me you're going to be a man, and I can fuck off out of your life, then I meet you and you're running around in a dress and want make-up tips. We're going to be in the final. What don't you understand?

Cato : Isn't it dangerous to wear something like that? They're all drunk and shouting.

Üzüm : Do you have any idea how much you wrecked?

Cato : No.

Üzüm : I've never been so betrayed.

Cato : How did I betray you?

Üzüm : I don't care what you are.

Cato : But I do care what I am.

Üzüm : I wanted you just the way you were, in between.

Cato : I'm not an in between.

Üzüm : Then what are you? A faggot in a dress?

Cato : I'll call you. Some time.

Üzüm : Don't.

Cato : I—

Üzüm : Don't call me, I'm alright. I've been feeling fine, much better since you stopped calling. Really, since I found out what a shit you are, I've been doing great, please don't call me. I'm starting to forget the sound of your voice, that helps. But your voice will be completely different anyway. Everything about you will be different, hey, who knows how you'll turn out. But you've certainly got balls, I can't deny that.

Cato : I'm getting married.

Üzüm : —

Cato : —

Üzüm : That's nice. Great. Congratulations.

Cato : Excuse me.

Üzüm : Well.

Cato : Yes.

Üzüm : You look ridiculous in a dress.

Cato : —

Üzüm : Yes.

Cato : Yes.

Üzüm : Are you getting married at the funeral?

Cato : –

Üzüm : Do you really believe it?

Cato : What?

Üzüm : That he'll marry you?

Cato : Someone like me, you mean?

Üzüm : Are you getting married as a man?

Cato : I am a man. If I get married, then as a man. Don't you get it, I can wear dresses or suits. I'm sorry if that confuses you. But it's your own body that you can't accept, not mine. Flaunt your breasts to the whole football stadium and find something out about yourself.

Üzüm : Oh wow.

Cato : Why am I betraying you all?

Üzüm : I'm not "you all". I'm me.

Cato : Why am I always betraying everyone by doing what I am?

Üzüm : –

Cato : Why?

Üzüm : Do you want to watch the match with me?

Cato : Excuse me?

Üzüm : Do you want to watch the match with me?

Cato : You and I?

Üzüm : We'll celebrate your engagement. With lots of firecrackers.

Cato : And wearing a dirndl?

Üzüm : We'll buy some firecrackers and sit on the roof, watch the match, let of firecrackers and scream. It's really liberating. Honest. AAAAA she screams Join in! AAAAA

Cato : –

Üzüm : Come on, join in!

Cato : Aaaa

Üzüm : Go for it! AAAAA AAAAA

Cato : gets louder

They both scream until they're out of breath.

Üzüm : Feels good, doesn't it?

Cato : Yes.

Üzüm : You breathe more deeply.

Cato : laughs

Üzüm : Again?

Cato : laughs No, I don't think so.

Üzüm : I've been thinking a lot about my grandmother lately. I even talk to her, although she's not here. Off my rocker, right? She came here when she was my age. And she didn't know anybody, she just ended up here. In those days there was no Internet, Skype, all that shit, she phoned her family in the village once a month.

Lived in a home. Sometimes people stood outside with torches

and shouted in a language that she didn't understand. She just came here,

learned the language, produced children, and when she knew she'd done what

she had to do, she went back, and since then has lived on what she made.

All alone. And I think of her and wonder how she knew that.

That it was right. Because you can only have that much strength if you

know that something is really right. Where you are. Where you've ended up. As if you

hadn't just ended up somewhere randomly. From one place to the next, from one

person to the next. That nothing is random or futile. Absolutely. You know

it. You're so sure of it, that it's not even an issue, you don't even question it.

You simply come, you simply go. You know that where you are is the right place

to be, even when people are standing outside your door with torches shouting

the opposite. I actually only have that feeling when I look at your face. Then I have this

strength in me, this feeling of being in the right place. Otherwise I don't. Otherwise never.

* * *

Serösha : It stinks in here.

Udi : I didn't feel like tidying up.

Serösha : It's disgusting. Did an animal die here?

Udi : We don't have any pets.

Serösha : When did you last open the windows?

Udi : Me – no idea.

Serösha : I'm afraid of touching something in case I catch something.

Udi : Can you please not joke about my home?

Serösha : It's really dirty here. And ugly.

Udi : Great. Okay. Can you stop now?

Serösha : That's so ugly, I mean, what kind of trash is that? Is it a gay thing to like things like that? Such obviously ugly things. As tasteless as it's possible to get.

Udi : We bought it together. It was – expensive.

Serösha : You're mad.

Udi : In an antiques shop. For the new flat. I thought – we'll move into a new flat and then I'll hang it up.

Serösha : Oh great, now don't start crying.

Udi : I really thought –

Serösha : Passport. My passport. Please.

Udi : He's such a shit for leaving me like that.

Serösha : Get up, what are you doing –

Udi : My whole body hurts!

Serösha : Hey, I'm not your therapist –

Udi : We had plans, you know? We had two girls with whom we wanted to make children, one for them, one for us, it would have all been so perfect –

Serösha : Come on, get up.

Udi : It hurts –

Serösha : Yes, of course it hurts.

Udi : Can you hold me for a moment?

Serösha : You want me to do what?

Udi : Hold me, can you please hold me for a moment?

Serösha : No.

Udi : Do I stink?

Serösha : No –

Udi : Please, just for a minute, I haven't been outside for days, I haven't eaten and yes, alright, I also haven't showered. And then I go on the street to think of ways to kill myself, and who do I run into in this big city? You! Please, I know it's stupid, but can't you give me a hug? Then I'll stop.

Crying. And talking. And then we'll quickly find your passport and you can go and forget about me as if nothing had happened and I'll kill myself.

Serösha : –

Udi : Please.

Serösha : –

Udi : –

Serösha : –

Udi : –

They hug. Enter Roy.

Roy : What's he doing here?

Udi : We're looking for Serösha's passport.

Roy : Serösha's?

Serösha : Yes my passport, if that's alright with you.

Roy : That's how you're looking for his passport?

Udi : We were just –

Roy : You're the guy from –

Serösha : Yes, the guy from.

Roy : Why did you bring him here?

Serösha : Thanks for the little dance the other day.

Udi : He needs his passport.

Roy : And so you bring him home with you?

Udi : His father died and he has to go to the funeral.

Roy : You want me to believe that.

Udi : He needs help.

Serösha : I need help?

Roy : You shut up!

Serösha : I don't want to get involved, I just want my passport and my money back and then we can sort it all out without the police and part ways without any fuss –

Roy : I thought you weren't gay.

Serösha : I'm not.

Roy : Is that your consolation prize?

Udi : Now you're suddenly jealous.

Roy : You two were fucking with me!

Udi : You're doing that to yourself the whole time.

Roy : How long has this been going on?

Udi : It's got nothing to do with you.

Serösha : I'm going to call the cops now, this is too ridiculous.

Roy : You'll do fuck all, ballerina.

Serösha : Give me back my phone!

Roy : Your phone is now my phone, and now get the hell out of here.

Serösha : I'll show you –

Udi : Hey, hey – let each other go!

Roy : Come on. Serösha.

Serösha : I'm going to –

Udi : I said stop! Stop it, now!

* * *

Serösha : Everywhere people are dying. Moscow, Chertanovo, fourth floor of fifteen, green hallway, flickering ceiling lights. Sometimes none. These are all the images I have. Does anyone care?

The same blood is flowing in your veins as in mine, my boy, never forget that.

What does that mean? Death is flowing through your veins, old man, and through mine –

They'll arrest me on the spot. They'll drag me to the military. Straight from the airport.

In the country with the highest suicide rate in the world. The boys don't brush their teeth

for weeks, then scrape off the plaque and inject it into themselves in the hope

that their arm will fall off and they can't shoot, not at the Ukrainians and not at

themselves. Only a few survive. Forget it. I can't go there.

Yes, and then what? To stand with my hands in my pockets in front of an

embalmed doll. Waxed. Like Lenin. So that my uncle can whisper in my

ear:

Hands out of your pocket, and: Stand straight. You stand to attention in front of an officer.

For God's sake!

So that they come and stand with me, and think they can say something. So that they can smell me, touch me. Judge me, this product from the west. Our pride and joy. I'm neither your nephew, nor your son, nor a soldier. Get your hands off me.

Cato : Drink this and I'll put the rest on your wounds.

Serösha : It hurts!

Cato : Swallow, don't think.

Serösha : I –

Cato : Don't think.

Serösha : It's like at home.

Cato : It's okay.

Serösha : As a child my parents would rub vodka on me when I had a fever.

Cato : Well then, you're parents did something right.

Serösha : That's how you turn babies into alcoholics.

Cato : Not you. You're still just sucking at your glass.

Serösha : Hey, what are you doing –

Cato : Rub it in.

Serösha : It's cold!

Cato : I'm glad that you came.

Serösha : Thank you for – for taking care of me.

Cato : I couldn't leave a mutt like you just lying on the street.

Serösha : I wasn't lying.

Cato : Sure, you were just having a little rest, I know.

Serösha : Is that what you think of me?

Cato : I don't think anything about you.

Serösha : –

Cato : –

Serösha : –

Cato : Do you find me attractive?

Serösha : Listen –

Cato : No, listen. Do you find me attractive? My tits, my arse?

Serösha : Yes.

Cato : The way I am?

Serösha : Yes, I find you attractive. I find everything about you attractive.

Cato : And if it all changes? If I start growing hairs on my chest?

Serösha : Do you want to cut them off?

Cato : I'll smell different.

Serösha : I can't right now, do we have to – can't we talk about it one step at a time?

Cato : Do you love me?

Serösha : What's up with you?

Cato : When I was a child they never really rubbed me with anything when I was in pain, or made me tea. I did it myself. When I was five I already knew how to make a tea for an upset stomach. By the age of twelve how to use a condom.

I told my mother, I'm not a virgin anymore, and she looked at me like:

Congratulations. And now what? When blood came out of me,

I didn't dare tell anybody about it. I thought my body was

playing a joke on me. This can't be. It will stop, finally.

The bleeding. The doctor told me. They tell you so many things, they keep trying

to persuade you the whole time. I hate going to this therapist. I have to go over

and over everything and act as if I'm suffering. I'm not. I'm not suffering.

I'm very happy. I'm really optimistic.

Serösha : About us?

Cato : I was at Üzümlü's again.

Serösha : Oh.

Cato : I just thought I should tell you.

Serösha : What do you mean you thought you should tell me?

Cato : I met her in a shop –

Serösha : And?

Cato : Well –

Serösha : So you felt sorry for her?

Cato : Let me –

Serösha : Right there in the shop?

Cato : No –

Serösha : What do you want to tell me?

Cato : I want everything to be out in the open when we go to the funeral. I don't want

there to be anything between us.

Serösha : I see.

Cato : I always want to be truthful with you. That's why I'm telling you.

Serösha : Always the truth.

Cato : Yes.

Serösha : Alright. The truth. How nice. And what is the truth?

Cato : The truth is, everything is going to turn out great.

Serösha : Why, how do you know?

Cato : Because I know.

Serösha : Because?

Cato : Because you see me for what I am and I see you for what you are. And it works.

Serösha : Always the truth.

Cato : Please, don't look like that.

Serösha : I'm going alone.

Cato : No, wait –

Serösha : Here's your truth. I'm going on my own.

Cato : No, I'm coming with you.

Serösha : You're not invited.

Cato : Now hang on a minute. That thing with Üzüim –

Serösha : Didn't mean anything?

Cato : Yes.

Serösha : What kind of a bad person are you to say something like that? You fuck a woman who would kill for you, and so that I don't get angry, you even say it didn't mean anything.

Cato : –

Serösha : Or did it really not mean anything?

Cato : –

Serösha : You're really disgusting.

Cato : Serösha –

Serösha : I find your face nauseating, have you looked in the mirror lately? Sometimes it just melts, have you noticed, when you pull that face like the one you're pulling now. Then your eyes flow apart, you look retarded. Ugh!

Cato : Wait, please wait –

Serösha : I've never punched someone in the face, but with your mug,

sometimes when you start to quiver, I just want to punch you.

–

Cato : Don't touch me!

Serösha : I'm not touching you. I find you hideous. You think it's because of Üzüüm, but I'm as turned off by that whore as I am by you. Fuck whomever you want. I wanted to leave ages ago, I should have done it. That's the truth. Here it is. When I imagined taking me with you, I wanted to get out of here on the next flight. And then some faggots steal my ticket and my passport and I'm stuck here. With you. What are you doing here? Who told you you could be here?

Cato : It's my flat.

Serösha : Piss off. Leave!

Cato : You already had a ticket?

Serösha : I had a ticket, just for me. I just went to a bar for a quick drink.

Then these blackheads pulled one on me, twice. Fucking illegal immigrants. I got it back, my passport. I don't want to see you anymore. Your face. It's changing as if there was something under your skin that's crawling apart.

* * *

Roy : Ow, that hurts.

Udi : Stay still, otherwise you'll be running around with those bruises for a while.

Roy : At least put a towel around it.

Udi : Wuss.

Roy : Nice to hear you laugh.

Udi : Yes, nice to laugh. Again.

Roy : Udi –

Udi : No, let's not do that now.

Roy : We're not doing anything. You're pressing a load of ice on my face and hoping that I choke.

Udi : Yes.

Roy : I can't feel my nose anymore.

Udi : Maybe it's broken.

Roy : What kind of guys do you pick up?

Udi : What do you mean pick up?

Roy : I really thought you were fucking.

Udi : Fuck off.

Roy : What a psychopath.

Udi : I find it sexy that you'll beat someone up for me.

Roy : I didn't.

Udi : Don't ruin that image.

Roy : I didn't pick him up to – OW!

Udi : Did I press too hard?

Roy : If it wasn't already broken, it is now.

Udi : I'm not sorry.

Roy : I missed your voice.

Udi : –

Roy : I did. Even if it's unimportant. I'm probably not allowed to say this. How are you? I mean – stupid question, but seriously.

Udi : I love you.

Roy : Yes.

Udi : If you stay with me, I'll do everything.

Roy : What do you want to do?

Udi : Just lie like that. I'll hold you, and you lie back.

Roy : And when your nose has healed, you'll break it again.

Udi : Why did you come back here if not to work things out?

Roy : I'm going in a minute.

Udi : Why?

Roy : Lying on the pavement.

Udi : On the pavement?

Roy : Really, I thought I'd drop by. To see how you are.

Udi : Not true.

Roy : I was scared on the street. Stupid, yes, but I ran through the street and suddenly I had this feeling that it isn't safe.

Udi : And you came here.

Roy : You always loved me so much, I thought you didn't need me. I can want to leave you, be stand-offish, and you still cope. You simply love me.

Udi : No I don't. I don't cope.

Roy : –

Udi : How's your back?

Roy : It wasn't lumbago, it was my jaw. I was at the dentist, he said if I don't stop grinding my teeth my spine will snap.

I tense up my jaw muscles so much, it spreads everywhere else. If I carry on like that, then I won't be able to walk anymore in a year and my spine will split in two. And then he asked me if it has to do with my where I come from. And I didn't understand what he meant and just looked at him. I'm lying on his dentist's chair, practically upside down with this white bib around my neck, and him with his mouth guard. I just didn't understand if he was really asking me that or something completely different, and then he says again, really slowly and loud, whether IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH MY NATIVE COUNTRY THAT I TENSE MY JAW SO MUCH, and when I still don't move, he repeats the question in English. Although we've been speaking German the whole time. And then he says he's spoken about it with his colleagues; some of them have patients from that country. It must be awful.

What a state of affairs – and sticks his huge instrument down my throat.

And I have to puke. Gag reflex. I was sick all over myself.

Udi : –

Roy : Did you know that the jaw muscle is the strongest muscle in the whole body?

Udi : No.

Roy : Me neither.

Udi : –

Roy : –

Udi : What can be so bad, that you don't want me anymore?

Roy : I'm going to go, Udi. I can't stay here.

Udi : With me.

Roy : I came here to tell you that. I think. Whenever I see your face, I forgot it.

Udi : –

Roy : –

Udi : And when you go – do you know where? Where is it better?

Roy : It's not about better.

* * *

Cato : There's a funny atmosphere at the moment.

Üzüm : Yes.

Cato : On the streets. I don't like that screaming.

Üzüm . They're happy.

Cato : It doesn't look like it; it looks as if they're snarling.

Üzüm : You look like that too. When you come.

Cato . Yes. They're all having an orgasm. How are you doing?

Üzüm : We're in the final.

Cato : Yes.

Üzüm : I'm very well.

Cato : Seriously.

Üzüm : And you?

Cato : How are you.

Üzüm : I don't feel like having this conversation.

Cato : Okay.

Üzüm : Okay.

Cato : Can I stay here for a bit.

Üzüm : Yes.

Cato : May I?

Üzüm : You know what bothers me? You don't say can I be with you for a bit, you say, can I stay here for a bit. I'm just something, where you can be when he throws you out.

Cato : He didn't throw me out. He has to think over a few things, he's going through a difficult –

Üzüm : Why don't you fly with him?

Cato : I'm not flying, because.

Üzüm : His decision or yours?

Cato : Mourning phase, probably.

Üzüm : Did you tell him about us?

Cato : That's irrelevant.

Üzüm : Irrelevant.

Cato : I can feel how my bones are growing. It's a strange feeling.

My skin is becoming rougher, here on the chin and also the shoulders. Have you noticed? Here. The doctors say that's the way it should be, but don't want me to get undressed in front of them, they're afraid of touching me. The average age of people like me is 23. The probability of long-term relationships is –

Nobody tells you that it has to do with the fact that you are what you are. Well, some tell you, but with them it's fast. Almost painless. It's much worse with the ones who don't say it. Do you still want to have children?

Üzüm : What?

Cato : Do you want to have children? You wanted them really badly.

Üzüm : Yes. Not with you.

Cato : I understand.

Üzüm : Were you about to offer me some?

Cato : No.

Üzüm : Why bang on about it, right? That nobody wants you.

Cato : Yes.

Üzüm : You can understand that; you of all people can understand.

Cato : Yes, probably.

Üzüm : What it means not to be wanted.

Cato : –

Üzüm : It's strange, that you haven't got a clue. Or don't you want to have a clue? How much you're hurting me. What's your problem with women, is it some kind of revenge?

Cato : Why have I –

Üzüm : You'll be a real man. Only a man can be that egoistic. Not noticing what's going on around you. Are you also going to have a dick sewn on?

Cato : Üzüm, wait, I –

Üzüm : You don't care that we fuck, you don't care where you stay, if your mate throws you out, you don't care about anything. You don't care about me. You don't care

about women. You're turning away from us. Do you think you have to be like that to become a real man?

Cato : –

Üzüim : I want you to go.

Cato : –

Üzüim : It's not good for me when you're here. I don't know anymore who I am when I look in your face. That was the only thing that ever calmed me, and now you're taking it away from me. You're taking away your face. You're taking away our children, we had a plan, and now you're talking about skin problems. Your face is about to burst with all those hormones, it's so taut, I'm afraid your eyes are going to pop out. I can't deal with it. It hurts me. Your rough face and everything that you say. It makes me sad to see something like you I'll be totally honest with you – it's you. Short and sweet – you make me sick.

* * *

Roy : The gods found out that Tiresias could hear them, because he understood the language of the birds. And so they sent eagles that were as big as cliffs, with sharp talons and beaks out of bronze, and they chased Tiresias across the flat disc of the earth. He had hardly lain down to rest than he heard a wild screeching, and through the beating of their wings the gods themselves screamed. There was nowhere for Tiresias to hide from them, the birds pecked at him but they didn't kill him. They only ever ate a piece of his flesh, which then grew back together so that he would feel the pain all over again.

Half eaten up, blind, Tiresias pricked his eardrums, in the hope that the Gods would forgive him. He crawled on all fours over the fields, smelled the grass, groped at stones, tasted the nectar of the blossom and for the first time in ages was happy, because he didn't know anything anymore about gods and humans. Soon he had forgotten them completely and broke out in a laugh that reached to the furthest cave, where Echo carried it forth under the earth to Tartarus.

Üzüm : screams as if she was giving birth.

Udi : Why do you watch things like that?

Üzüm : YES YES YES YES YES YES YES

Udi : Yeah, yeah. We get it. Can you turn it off now?

Üzüm : YIPPPPEEEEE! Come here!

Udi : It's disgusting, now come down.

Üzüm : HURAAAAAAAHAH!

Udi : Yes. Congratulations. You're a global power again. Yippee! Now can I have another drink?

Üzüm : It's on me.

Udi : Does it really give you such a kick?

Üzüm : YEAAAAAH!

Udi : Go and change your panties.

Üzüm : No, I'll just take them off.

Udi : I don't think there's anything that makes you feel less like you belong.

Üzüm : But it's your victory too!

Udi : I'm glad you didn't say your war.

Üzüm : Please don't do that, I want to be happy, at least today.

Udi : As long as I get something to drink.

Üzüm : What's your problem?

Udi : Üzüm, we're sitting here and watching the world fall apart. In slow motion.

Üzüm : I'm just watching it grow together again.

Udi : It sounds like Intifada what they're doing out there.

Üzüm : Shut up. Let's drink.

Udi : That banging.

Üzüm : Cheers.

Udi : I don't want to go home.

Üzüm : To us!

Udi : Yes. To us. Exactly. Thanks. It suits you.

Üzüm : Cato gave it to me.

Udi : He only ever gave me something when he didn't want it himself.

Üzüm : Same here.

Udi : I wish he were dead.

Üzüm : Yes.

Udi : I want things to be so bad for him that he goes blind.

Üzüm : –

Udi : That he dies lonely and abandoned.

Üzüm : –

Udi : I wish he were here now.

Üzüm : What would you say?

Udi : I would smash his face in. Probably not.

Üzüm : What would you want to say?

Udi : Stay with me. Come back.

Üzüm : Why?

Udi : Why?

Üzüm : Yes, why? Why do people come back?

Udi : Because of me.

Üzüm : That's not enough.

Udi : Because we were good together. Because he wept in my arms.

Üzüm : Everyone does that at some point.

Udi : We had such a good plan.

Üzüm : Yes.

Udi : Jewish children.

Üzüm : Excuse me?

Udi : Okay, Cato dropped out, but you can still do it. He and I would adopt children, and because one of the fathers is Jewish, so are his children.

There are no half-Jews, anyone can tell you that. If the grandmother of your second cousin had a Jewish cat, then your whole clan is Jewish forever. And that's great. If he and I have children, the world stands a chance.

Üzüm : Why not also say Syrian, or Turkish?

Udi : It's got nothing to do with where they came from. Being Jewish is a condition.

Üzüm : A chosen one?

Udi : A chosen one.

Üzüm : I think I'm going to take you with me to my place tonight. You're not going to

make it to yours anymore.

Udi : No, I'm serious. If everyone is Jewish, then everyone's equally fucked up. No differences, no nations, and we could start to hate each other for different reasons. Love for example.

Üzüm : And on the way back to mine we'll make Jewish children.

Udi : Can you imagine me with a little thing like that? With a little howler like that, as big as the palm of my hand? I would put him on my shoulder like a mouse and he would sleep there. And mumble in my ear when he's thirsty. Can you imagine that?

Üzüm : Very clearly.

Udi : Right.

Üzüm : Then let's make it. To mark the occasion, let's make children. This is the right, the only right, evening for it. Udi, you're right, everything is collapsing. Flying apart. You're right. But we're not. We're living. We need to celebrate that. Let's make children, right now!

Udi : Now?

Üzüm : Yes!

Udi : Here on the bar?

Üzüm : Yes! If you like. To hell with them, to hell with them all. Come on –

Udi : What do you mean to hell with them?

Üzüm : If they don't want to join in.

Udi : Just you and me?

Üzüm : Why not? Make the world a better place.

Udi : Make the world a better place.

Roy comes in.

Udi : Oh my God.

Üzüm : We were just talking about you.

Roy : So I see.

Udi : Oh please, oh please not. It will be so much worse than I thought.

Roy : Can you just pour me a big glass of something?

Üzüm : Sure.

Roy : Are you drinking too? It's on me.

Udi : It's on you?

Roy : Anything wrong with that?

Üzüm : No, there's nothing wrong with that. Roy's buying us all a drink. Did you watch the match?

Roy : Thanks, Üzüm. No, I didn't watch the match. I had to work.

Üzüm : But you know already?

Roy : It's hard not to hear.

Üzüm : Are you pleased?

Roy : It's really great to see you both.

Üzüm : What's the matter, do you feel sick?

Roy : I can only taste the vodka.

Üzüm : Would you prefer a glass of water?

Roy : No, no water.

Udi : What are you doing here?

Roy : I –

Üzüm : It's a sign. Both of you here today, this evening. With me. I think you should both stop this nonsense. Really. You belong together. We all belong together. This is the night. Look outside, how beautiful it is.

Roy : can't –

Udi : Roy, listen: this running away, not running away, is ridiculous, we all want to run away but nobody does it, right? Listen: Üzüm bears our child, as planned. And the three of us will be its parents.

Roy : right now – Joking – sorry.

Üzüm : Did he puke?

Udi : Only vodka is coming out.

Üzüm : There are nicer ways of reacting to plans for starting a family.

Roy : I got this phone call. The voice. It was familiar, but also not, it was metallic. It took me so long to work out that I knew it, the

voice. I was on the night shift and there weren't many calls. The usual:

harassment on the street, groping between the legs, someone got a

black eye. Statistics. I ask the usual questions: What did the perpetrators look like?

Did they have an immigrant background?

And then this voice calls up and at first I thought: a girl, and I said: this is the

gay harassment hotline – but she said she's a he and is being pursued, and I

can hear that she's running, this person. And of course I think I know this person. Only that she sounds different now, tinny, but I know her. And then there are fireworks and everyone's screaming and I worry that the line will cut off, but I can still hear it, the voice. And she knows me. Calls me by my name. Somebody's shouting in the background, I don't whether it's in my street, or where it's coming from, as if it was all one space. The voice is panting and tries to tell me something while running, but I can't understand anything she says. I say, I'm going to call the police, tell them where you are. And then I can hear the others getting closer. Caterwauling. And the person on the telephone screams and I can hear how she's being beaten. I hang up. Hang up and call the police. Tell them I'm calling from the gay harassment hotline, that a person called up. And screamed, somebody needs to come quickly. The address. He didn't tell me where he was. The name: Cato. But that's not his name. Not his real name. I don't know his other name.

* * *

Cato: The nymph Salmacis knew exactly where she had to go. She didn't know why, but she knew she had to. On the bank of the river that she had run to she met Hermaphroditus and she sat down next to him in silence. For a while they looked at the shimmering surface of the water together, and Salmacis took two thin cigarettes out of the breast pocket of the flowing shirt she was wearing. She put them both between her lips, lighted them and offered one to Hermaphroditus. They smoked for a while. The water gave off quivering sparks and dazzled them both, so that they kept having to shut their eyes. How long have we been here already? Salmacis asked Hermaphroditus, after they had finished their cigarettes. I have a feeling we will be doing this for ages, replied the youth, who seen in the glinting light of the bright sun suddenly could have also been an old man. He took off his clothes and went in the water. He didn't turn around, didn't indicate for Salmacis to follow. He went deeper and deeper into the water, until it came up to his neck, and looked up.

He didn't hear Salmacis coming. As a nymph, she was burdened by neither the earth's gravity nor its slowness. The shirt didn't make any noise either, she had taken everything off and came in naked. Her strong arms entwined Hermaphroditus' thin neck like a gust of wind. She swirled her tongue around his head like a snake. Her heels clawed at his hipbones. She glided inside him through his skin, melted into him until they were one.

And so Hermaphroditus and Salmacis danced as a single body, until they disappeared under the surface of the water.

In his new body, which was man and woman, Hermaphroditus shone in transcendental perfection. This body carried him against the laws of gravity with the lightness of a nymph. During the midday heat he usually tried to rest in the shade of the temple of his mother, Love. Naked, lying half on his stomach, half on his side, his arms folded under his neck, his face turned away from the sun, he fell asleep.

One day, some humans sought the shade of the temple at midday. They saw this beautiful being, asleep in a sea of fabric, and knew that it must be the perfect body that the prophet Tiresias had described before he disappeared. They came closer and looked at him. How his full breasts and his and his sex rested on the linen. His long hair gathered up in the nape of his neck. The balls of the left feet pressed into the fabric, so that the cloth enveloped his body in soft waves.

They were confused by this body. Because they knew that it was everything that they could never be. That it challenged everything that they did, made a mockery of it. They knew that they would never attain his knowledge, his perfection. He lay there like a peaceful fissure on the steps of the temple. Like a mockery.

If he was real, then nothing that the gods had told them was true.

If he was real, then they had spent their entire lives chasing after the wrong thing and would do so for ever more.

They removed his feet. His thighs up to his knees. Then his ribs. They ate his member, they cut off his breasts. Before they broke his lips, Hermaphroditus screamed to his mother. The people were horrified and saw what they had done. They created a sculpture out of marble that was exactly as long as the body of Hermaphroditus when they had found him, and carried it into the temple. Having been turned into a myth, he could not

harm anyone anymore. From this moment on he was a story. You could find it beautiful, you could mourn it.

But the mother of Hermaphroditus, Love, promised eternal revenge. Spitting bile, she threw herself onto earth, broke into a thousand pieces and settled herself into every eyeball like a poisonous arrow.

Since then, every time you blink, I'm there. And I'm not moving. Scratching your eyeballs from the inside. There's no need to look like that.

Hello.