

Ákos Német

Julia and her Lieutenant

or

Until death do us part

Characters:

KOVACS, FERENC, cashiered officer

JULIA, dancer, his wife

RITA, dancer

BANDI, the boss

COLONEL

BOY, waiter at the Rusty Rooster

KEGLEVICH, service expired officer, friend of Kovács

YOUNGSTERS and **CIVILIANS** on the street

FORIS, carpenter, unemployed

Act I.

(Windy early morning)

(Kovács and Foris)

KOVACS (bored): Why did I become an officer? You asked a stupid question. It is not so easy to answer, and it is far more easy to answer. We were not quite rich. There were three of us, boys... I think, sometimes we drove our mother mad.

(Takes a cigarette, which is offered).

ARM-CO, you know, what that is? Army College, they pay for your studies. At home we could not cover our asses, we were so poor. My mother went gray really early.

FORIS: And your father?

KOVACS: What the hell?

FORIS: So he left you.

KOVACS: Can you hear it? How strange?...! The air is frozen and clinks like ice.

FORIS: They Don't like the former officers.

KOVACS: So that I noticed.

FORIS: Why did you leave the army, hm?

KOVACS: And what is your profession?

FORIS: I am a carpenter.

KOVACS: That s a good job.

FORIS: What if it is not?

KOVACS: Are you Transylvanian?

FORIS: I hate Transylvanians.

KOVACS (laughs): So you are a Transylvanian.

FORIS: I was born in Budapest.

KOVACS: Now I know why you Don't like uniforms. You have just been released. *from jail*

FORIS: From my wife. But let's drop the subject. You had fine life of course. A professional soldier can get as many chicks as he wants.

KOVACS (does not pay attention, blows smoke puffs): There is a moment, when in one's life there is nothing else left, but women.

FORIS: You all screwed the wives of others didn't you? What was your rank?

KOVACS: Do you think, I found it easy to get used to this? I like when everything is in order. I hate, when something doesn't fit. I think this is rooted in my soul. I just hang around on this square, I am cold in this coat. And I am not able to get any work. I was taken two times, but just for one day. I have no civil job, of course.

FORIS: You were an ensign, or a lieutenant, weren't you?

KOVACS: How many tramps loaf around here every morning!

FORIS: Today there is not so many of us.

KOVACS: Look, how they patter. Flock of tramps. Just patter around!

FORIS: It is better for a woman.

KOVACS: I'm not going to sweep the streets.

FORIS: A woman give birth to a child, and she is all right for the next three years. Then comes the following child. Wonderful love, good love, well, this is what love is, you see.

KOVACS: It is disappointing to go home every day. I won't do anything again all day.

FORIS: And they can also get a flat.

KOVACS: I just walk wall to wall at home and keep thinking.

FORIS: Buddy, I Don't bother to read the job advertisements. I just come here every day, somebody will need me and take me anyway.

KOVACS: We shall have a pretty winter, pretty cold winter. The air is tinkling like at Christmas time for the kids.

FORIS: Though I have a good craft.

KOVACS: Soon we can set out to go home, buddy. Nothing seems to be happening here today.

FORIS: You are married, aren't you?

KOVACS: I s'pose I'll leave. Nobody has taken me yet.

FORIS: So you are married. Don't be dumb. A clever man could do well out of his wife.

KOVACS: I love my wife.

FORIS: Sure. Screw her, and make use of what she can offer.

KOVACS: You talk too much.

(Kovacs, Foris and the Ganger at the same place)

GANGER: Gentlemen, are there bricklayers or locksmiths among you?

FORIS: I am a carpenter. But I can work with iron, if necessary.

GANGER: Well then, go to this address! And what about you?

KOVACS: I'm an unskilled worker.

GANGER: I have already picked out my helpers. And only a bricklayer is needed. Don't you know one? (He goes further down) And you?

(Kovacs an Foris at the same place)

KOVACS: Shit. It has been going on for weeks.

FORIS: I can give you an address, where you could go to do some cleaning work.

KOVACS: I will not sweep the dust of others.

FORIS: Oh, so you are a gentleman!

KOVACS: I just want to get some work, and not to humiliate myself.

FORIS: My wife is also a cleaning lady, what is wrong with that? She tidies at a writer's place every night. He doesn't do anything either, but his nest is well-feathered. (laughs)

KOVACS: I love the intellectuals.

(Smiles. Inhales the cigarette. Looks at the glowing embers)

(Alone at the same place)

GANGER: Tramps, dirty bastards, punks, gypsies fuck off. Do you all want to work? Did you really think that there is as much work as that? There isn't on the entire world, I swear. Go back to your village, or who gives a shit. Kill one another! I need a bricklayer, not loafers, like you. Why the hell did you get born at all?

(Room, in the morning, Julia and Kovacs)

(A storm is approaching)

Julia (half asleep) What is this?

KOVACS (Makes coffee, looks out of the window) Maybe the God. You are half asleep aren't you? A branch of tree is knocking on the roof, nothing else. The wind moans outside... it has started to rain. Summer is over, it is sold by its weight. What a sluggish morning it is. What a beauty you are, what a beauty! You should not be so beautiful, so lovable. It makes me to be afraid of even looking at you. Her hair is like silk, her skin is like china.

JULIA (starts to wake up. Gulps with difficulty) Are you back already?

KOVACS: (Opens the window. Turns back, forms a black silhouette under the black clouds)

JULIA: I had a dreadful dream.

KOVACS: (watches her) Drink your coffee, and let me watch you with delight in the meantime. The worries are buzzing, they have settled on a drop of saliva at the corner of your mouth. Let me brush them away. (Laughs)

JULIA: What's the time?

KOVACS: I just keep talking, don't I? How I hate winters! You are cold on the streets. And it is dark till late in the morning.

JULIA: What did you say? What is the time?

KOVACS: Sleep a little more. It is about half eight.

JULIA: How come, that you are already back?

KOVACS: I'll never go there again, I Don't get any job on this square. At least I will be with you all the time.

JULIA: I am sure, that you will get a good job. No doubt. Trust me. We shall find you something. I will save you, hm?

KOVACS: I am happy, to...

JULIA: You have made a good coffee.

KOVACS: We shall manage somehow.

JULIA: Do not worry, I have enough money.

KOVACS: You told me that a couple of times.

JULIA: I'm scared of the nights.

KOVACS: You should quit.

JULIA: I detest the boss, Bandi.

KOVACS: It is horrid, that you go to work with gastralgia every night.

JULIA: Don't exaggerate!

KOVACS: I know, what I know.

JULIA: But I am a dancer, and this is a good place.

KOVACS: Do you still love me?

(In the room, at daytime, Kovacs alone)

KOVACS: The honour...the honour is the key to everything. What am I worth for a girl? Until death do us part.* For better, for worse* I want her to be happy. (hisses) I wish I had money. (grins) I have to try everything. I am confident, am I not? I cannot travel abroad of course. Well, it is only a slight blemish. But in case somebody is looking for a pushing man... isn't that right? It is raining. The wind is drunk, and the world cries over the beating, how nice it is. (grins like devil) I should never loose my temper, of course. What makes men to be more than breathing masses? Presumably that they can control themselves. Or is that what is called hindrance? What men would be like if they lost everything, that keeps them together? It is raining outside, and I have a suspended sentence. I have had no job for a year. I just walk on the streets, the wind chases the smoke, my soul's rest is burning like dry woods. Why is it that men would always run into the arms of women? She hushes me when I'd rather cry out. Isn't it a shame, that I long for her so much? Shame. It's a shame. She is not any better, nobody else is. She will be gained over little by little, won't she. And how unsatisfied they are, all of them. I am the only honest man on this rotten Earth. I am in love with my wife. And she disappears for half days. If I did not see her I would sell my soul to Satan. I just keep walking in the room all day. Just keep walking. Certainly I am not well up in women's work, otherwise I

could cook. Well, I'll have to learn it. And everything else. The neighbours and everybody... but what is wrong with me? Would I already be a different person? And what makes me to be so tired? Do I have my rights after all? (he laughs) Is it good for you to humiliate yourself that much? I wish I were rich. Or religious at least. I would not go any further but the church. (shouts) How could I endure to be watched by the others? (shouts) I Don't care, till we lead a good life. Good. Dear God! Oh, boy, if I could look in the mirror. At least I would be an alcoholic. Or a defeated hero! I wish I could be offended. Wouldn't it be better to get drunk and crawl on my hands and knees?

(at the night club, Rita and Julia)

RITA (looks at herself in the mirror) My father almost never talked to us. He was silent always, like a knife in the butter, though he claimed always that he liked us a lot. He saved the conversations for the dog exclusively. He talked to the bob-tail, which lied next to him on the carpet in the evenings. He kept his habit after he gone mad, and for a while we did not notice any changes. There is nothing uglier than the misery of the soul.

JULIA: (dreaming) When I was a girl...

RITA: Then, when my father was carried away, the dog had to be given a shot as well.

JULIA: ...we also had a big Dalmatian. There was a red ribbon tied around its neck, when we got it. I'm mean...I got it.

RITA: The dog kept on whining. That's why it needed the injection. (makes faces)

Men...(stops talking for a minute to correct her lipstick) cannot whine. Damn, it is smudged.

JULIA: Rita, what's wrong with you?

RITA: Drop this subject, will you? (aside) Silly bitch.

JULIA: (dreaming) I love dogs. I will have...

RITA: It is like...

JULIA: Why do you put so much make up on?

RITA: And your sweet lieutenant? Has he got a job yet?

JULIA: I make enough money.

RITA: (smiles) Money is never enough.

JULIA: Do you laugh at me?

RITA: I never laugh at anyone, darling.

JULIA: Why do you put on so much make up?

(in shady side street, two boys and Kovacs)

I. VOICE: What are you doing here at this deserted place, Lieutenant?

II. VOICE: Lieutenant, lieutenant, do you want to pretend that you Don't remember us?

I. BOY: (steps forward) We heard that you are discharged, you stinker. (smiles nicely)

Don't you miss the service?

II. BOY: We were your fucking favourites in the first squad, how could you forget about us? He loved us as much as the impetigious dogs.

I. BOY: Don't say that! He loved me as much as I thought I could not endure that much emotion. I thought I would mend my ways if somebody liked me that much. I would go to heaven, and get pissed off with the angels in the pubs.

II. BOY: I assume, it is our turn to do something evil with his good spirit. I suggest, to be bad to him just once.

KOVACS; Leave me alone, damn it, or I will break your arm!

II. BOY: Fuck off! Look, do not interfere with our philosophy!

I. BOY: Have you heard, that our lieutenant did not have to go to jail? Do you think, that he will get off scot-free from us, too?

II. BOY: It is bloody dark now. There are snow clouds in the sky. We can do what we want, even God will not see it. My soul almost got frozen while we were waiting for him. But it was worth.

I. BOY: You know us, asshole, Don't you? So now you have good reason to be scared.

II. BOY: Well, didn't I mention it to you beforehand? My heart is full of joy, to see you like that. Fuck you.

(At home, Julia and Kovacs)

JULIA: I've dropped in between two shows. I am going to make a soup, then I will have to leave...What happened to you?

KOVACS: Nothing. Let me go to the bathroom.

JULIA: Wait, I want to look at you...What is this?

KOVACS: Leave me alone, I have to go to the bathroom, Don't stop me. (with great irritation) I can fix something without your help after all!

JULIA: Who did this to you?

KOVACS: Let me wash my face, will you?!

JULIA: I'll go and get you something.

KOVACS: Leave me alone!

JULIA: Why do you talk to me like that?

KOVACS: (muttering) Finally I will have to watch you crying.

JULIA: What did you say?

KOVACS: (shouts) Do I have to say everything twice? Why don't you listen to me, damn it?

JULIA: I just want you to talk to me.

KOVACS: There she is. Crying again.

JULIA: Of course, you can't stand it.

KOVACS: I wish I could cry sometimes.

JULIA: Do you believe, that everything is so easy for me?

KOVACS: I wish somebody felt pity for me as well.

JULIA: I feel pity for you.

KOVACS: (shouts) The last thing I want is you feeling pity for me, damn it!

JULIA: My God, what's wrong with you?

KOVACS: On the other hand it would be better if you left now.

JULIA: Why should I leave?

KOVACS: Your admirers are waiting for you.

JULIA: Who are you talking about?

KOVACS: I feel sick because of your work.

JULIA: Why do you torture me by this all the time?

KOVACS: (watches her) If I had some money...

JULIA: You are my only one.

KOVACS: Sometimes I get so tired of you.

JULIA: Of me?

KOVACS: I swear sometimes you exhaust me.

JULIA: Poor thing, what has happened to you?

KOVACS: (calms down) Don't hold me in your arms all the time, you silly goose.

JULIA: Why do you push me away from you? Sometimes...

KOVACS: Sometimes...?

JULIA: I want to help you.

KOVACS: (ironically) Why?

JULIA: Don't you know?

KOVACS: (sarcastically) No. I don't. I don't have the faintest idea. I have been thinking about it all week.

JULIA: Are you capable at all to...?

KOVACS: And you?

JULIA: Can't you see?

KOVACS: What should I see?

JULIA: Oh, boy, what can I say? (laughs in pain)

KOVACS: (articulates) You are not able to provide any emotion, you are as emotional as a log of wood.

JULIA: What did they do to you?

KOVACS: (shouts) Oh, nothing, nothing at all, nothing. Except that they kicked my ass, that's all. Nothing but they just beat me up in a side-street, and almost kicked my teeth out. Of course you have no idea, what it means. You just live as a baby doll in a jewelry box. They all feel sorry for you because of your misfortunate relationship with your lieutenant. You enjoy acting out the role of solicitude,

Don't you? They say, what a freak he is, that he let this dear girl to... (his mouth trembles, he strokes her hair)

JULIA: Please, Don't talk to me like that.

KOVACS: Now you cry again. Though has nobody ever hit you in your entire life. Not even your father, nor me, no one. Julia, Julia, she has to be protected from the wind,

from the sun. (smacks her face. Watches her panting) Now you can cry. You have got good reason.

(In the street, two citizens and Foris)

(additional scene)

I. CITIZEN: (grumbles) What is going on, can you tell?...You do not know which system should you hate more, this, or the old one.

II. CITIZEN: How do they...how do they call this square? It used to be Moscow Square.

I. CITIZEN: So as it is.

II. CITIZEN: Moscow Square?

FORIS: No, you are wrong, it is called Prince of Crown square.

I. CITIZEN: No, I am not. They did not change the name finally, though they intended to.

II. CITIZEN: It makes no difference for me, I just need to find this address...

I. CITIZEN: They changed some street names, and did not change others. They are all Jewish, how could we follow their way of thinking?

FORIS: They all tell lies, no matter, which nation they belong to. They tell lies, and hold out their hands, so as their palms could be greased, but I'd rather piss in them.

I CITIZEN: What did you expect? Something else?

II. CITIZEN: Revenge calls for revenge, gentlemen. It is a hard case.

FORIS: I suppose it would have been easier to open a blank page.

I. CITIZEN: How naive you are. As for me, I don't believe even in the future!

I. CITIZEN: But sir, for God's sake! Tell me, who believes in the future indeed?

(in the dressing room, Rita, a girl and a boy)

RITA: Have you calmed down?

BOY: (who works at the night club) You are so relaxed, but me...If I told the police what I am about to do, they would arrest me.

RITA: It is not as easy as that.

BOY: I will kill him. Cut him up in pieces.

RITA: Why do you start it again?

BOY: (coolly) I am going to kill my father.

RITA: How old are you, my boy?

BOY: Sixteen.

RITA: And does it fit to a sixteen year old young man to boohoo, like a kid? Tell me!

BOY: (grinds his teeth) He kills my mother.

RITA: Here you are! Go ahead and eat!

GIRL: (arranges her dress looking in the mirror) Who is your father?

BOY: He is Mr Nagy. My mother has a small wares shop in Forgach utca.

GIRL: Who? Nagy? Aha, I know him! (to herself) He is a bad booser.

RITA: (tunes the radio) When I was about your age, I also hated my mother. I wanted to escape from her. (without emotions) And now its me, who looks after her.

GIRL: That young chap will be here again tonight. I can tell. He is quite handsome.

(laughs) Even more...

RITA: Sometimes I have to put diapers on her.

GIRL: How he stares at me! I wish I knew, why he keeps coming here. He watches us all the time.

RITA: So are you relaxed finally?

BOY: I was calm before as well.

GIRL: He always comes in, when we are on stage, you and me and Zsuzsa. I have noticed. He sits down at the back just watch him tonight.

BOY: I cannot eat. And I start trembling, when he comes home like that.

RITA: Wipe your face with this! Oh, you just spread the dirt.

BOY: What comes now, Rita?

GIRL: (calls out to the corridor) Julia, do you have a sore throat? (explains to Rita) She is so silent all day. (calling out) Hm? What is wrong with you?

RITA: Listen to me! You have to defend yourself, do you understand?

BOY: Are you crazy? Leave me alone! (stands up, turns the radio louder).

RITA: (catches the outstretched arm of the boy, twists it to his back, pants with satisfaction) You see, mud-head. Catch his arm like this, when he comes home drunk, and does not behave himself. He will groan like a kid. If you hit him on the head by a bottle, he will sleep till morning comes, and everybody will have a rest.

(The other girl twists his other arm back, they fight)

BOY: (tries to escape in vain, struggles). Filthy bitches!

GIRL: (laughs) So, what's up, big cowboy? (The radio is unbearably loud)

(In the dressing room Kovacs, Julia)

(The lieutenant is waiting in the doorway, only his silhouette can be seen, which seems to be frightening.)

JULIA: Is that you? That's you, isn't it? Why are you standing there? Is there something wrong? (waits) Has anything bad happened?

KOVACS: (not right away) I am ashamed of myself. My heart is broken... I cannot grasp what has happened. (struggles finding the words) Of course there is no pardon for this... it is not an excuse, that I was tired, exhausted. What a monster I am!

JULIA: I have already forgiven you.

KOVACS: I did not forgive myself. And I never will. Most likely you have never been beaten by anybody. And me, such a... How primitive bastard I am. Julia, I am ashamed of myself. (She does not look at him) I was thinking about it all night...I was walking on the streets. There are really miserable people out there this time of the day.

JULIA: It was very cold at dawn...you might have caught a cold. (The head of the lieutenant is in her lap, she is stroking his hair.)

KOVACS: At least don't feel pity for me. I would not think of myself as a bloody bastard. Julia, Julia...

JULIA: It's all right, it's all right. Everything is all right.

(long silence)

KOVACS: Why am I like that?

JULIA: (apathetically) Can we drop the subject?

KOVACS: It is going to be different from tomorrow on.

JULIA: Go and get some sleep. You did not have any.

KOVACS: I shall be a house keeper, I will take out the garbage. Any work will do. I have had enough of myself.

JULIA: Calm down.

KOVACS: I would like to do something. Something, which makes sense. A fine, a brave thing. I want to change my whole life to be a parade. (coughs) I would bring you flowers every day. But who needs someone with a criminal record?

JULIA: If you cannot sleep, just get some rest. I will not make coffee for you.

KOVACS: (shouts) I am going to start a new life. Brave new life. I am going to be an entrepreneur, or a millionaire. I will make money of shit as well...Oh, God, I am so happy now.

JULIA: The neighbours will knock on the wall if you keep shouting like that.

KOVACS: (laughs, does not pay attention) Fuck them!

(separate room at the night club, Rita and the Colonel)

RITA: D'ya think, that I am a whore?

COLONEL: Why do you laugh?

RITA: I do what I want. If I fell like it, I do it with you, or with someone else.

COLONEL: When shall it be enough?

RITA: On the other hand you have no rights for me.

COLONEL: I will put it here.

RITA: I am too good for you.

COLONEL: I called you yesterday and the day before.

RITA: Then what?

COLONEL: I suppose, I have got the rights to ask you where you were?

RITA: Where I was? At work.

COLONEL: This was the first place, where I was looking for you. I was told that you had a day off.

RITA: I remember now, I was with a good-looking cock.

COLONEL: I told you before to drop these jokes.

RITA: Who said that it was a joke? I don't have to make a list of my whereabouts for you.

COLONEL: You are such a hooker.

RITA: What if I was unfaithful to you? No, I could not have been unfaithful to you, because what kind of link is there, between us? Tell me. This maybe?

COLONEL: What holds me back, not to...

RITA: And what shall we do now?

COLONEL: At least you should not laugh. Bimbo.

(At the night-club in the afternoon)

GIRL: Is that you? Are you talking to yourself?

KOVACS: It is much easier to talk, than to keep silent, don't you know?

GIRL: If you have many fixed ideas, like that, you will loose your senses pretty soon.

KOVACS: In case of going mad, I would be relieved with a monomania, now I have a whole harem of fixed ideas. Why don't you just vanish?.

Girl: Tough guy. (leaves)

BOY: (waiter, comes) What can I get you?

KOVACS: (absorbed in his thoughts). A Steffl. (the boy leaves) What a faithful town is this. They are tearing down the old symbols, red stars and such. It is great, isn't it? It definitely does good to our self-esteem. (The boy puts a glass on the table, and pours bier in it from a bottle. Leaves)

COLONEL: (comes down from upstairs) Kovacs, what a surprise, Kovacs. Salute, my boy. It has been a long time, that I saw you. How is your wife?

KOVACS: Good afternoon, Colonel. (unwillingly) I would not ask you what the news is in the barracks. Would you like to join me, Colonel?

COLONEL: I have got to go now, my boy.

KOVACS: Our army...This country needs us as much as a corpse needs sunglasses.

COLONEL: You are... disappointed, my boy.

KOVACS: Look, Colonel, this town is so empty at night! Almost as empty as the heart of your Rita. I Don't want to hurt you, but your Rita is a ... (smiles maliciously)

COLONEL: Look, Kovacs. You know, that I used to like you. Though you may have forgotten this fact.

KOVACS: (has not too much affinity for this conversation) I know more than you would think. I owe my freedom to you, had not it been depending on you, I would be in jail by now. But they let me get away with it.

COLONEL: Stop it, my boy! I just wanted to tell you...to pull yourself together.

KOVACS: (suddenly) You deserve a much better girl. You deserve a much better life. You are a good man. (laughs) You are not at all like an officer. (they stare at one another)

KOVACS: Oh, I am sorry.

COLONEL: (sits down) You said, that you wanted to talk to me.

KOVACS: If you take an advice from a younger man, Colonel... Just forget about this girl.

COLONEL: What is it that you wanted to talk about with me?

KOVACS: I was told that there is nobody at the barracks to run the depot. I was told, that the old Mayer had retired. This post can be undertaken by a civilian as well, am I right?

COLONEL: What is your trouble with Rita? Your wife and her are colleagues, as far as I know.

KOVACS: In case you said a couple of words for me in the army... I would be happy to take the position of officer in charge in the depot.

COLONEL: (does not take it into consideration) Do you want to be rich?

KOVACS: Watch, the girls have already come out. The show is about to start.

COLONEL: (Watches them melancholically) Damn. (smokes)

(Kovacs, Colonel, Boy at the same place)

BOY: (comes) Can I get you anything else?

KOVACS: Colonel, what would you like to order?

COLONEL: (to the boy) Asshole. Have you forgotten what I usually drink?

And make it quick, asshole.

BOY: (pale, leaves)

KOVACS: You come here often, Colonel, don't you? It seems that you know this boy well enough.

COLONEL: What do you mean that I know him. That's funny. Of course, I know him.

(At the night club, two of them)

JULIA: What's wrong with you? If you walk around with such a cross expression on your face, the boss will notice.

BOY: There is nothing more miraculous, then the neon-lights. Have you noticed that you are getting more and more wrinkles?

JULIA; The other boy, who was here before you, got fired because of mischiefs like this. Bandi likes the happy employees only.

BOY: You have been working here long, haven't you?

JULIA: You look exhausted.

BOY: I just walk around the tables, and listen to the conversation of the people. They talk about every stupid unimportant bullshit, except for what really is important.

JULIA: You are still like a kid.

(Colonel and Kovacs by the table)

COLONEL: (he is in a bad mood, drinks continuously till the end of the scene) It is too bad. What will become to this country? I don't want to blame anyone, but after all...Just between you and me, who are these people? All I can do is just laughing. So it has got to an end? Finally it was able to become history? And when will my turn come *to be fired*? They did not reach to the troops so far, probably that is why I am still in the service. I am fifty-two years old. I have got a tab, a star distinction, and a gravel, and what else have I got? I remained to be an honest man. This time is a mere dish-wash, everybody pours the bitterness of their heart in the bowl.

KOVACS: These are civilians, Colonel.

COLONEL: There is something wrong floating in the air, like a carcass in water, something is rotting, something is decaying. My past has gone wrong, something is wrong. Something is wrong with me.

KOVACS: For God's sake, show me somebody, with whom there is no problem.

COLONEL: I am thinking about my childhood. Why does one has to have so many memories? I was a servant, as a child. If I grow old, I may well be a servant again. And what has happened in between, reflects in me just like a dream. Who would believe this?

KOVACS: They say that you went to Vietnam, Colonel.

COLONEL: I did not go there. Let them say, what they want. You know, these days it is no use to boast of the past. I have turned so many jerks to be a decent man in this country, and this is what I have turned to be in the meantime. This fucking left leg of mine. It becomes stiff from time to time. And what can a rifle colonel do after being mustered out?

KOVACS: He can wear his medals.

COLONEL: No one ever wears them, not even me. Dammit, I would send anything to hell, if I could still believe in a single thing, but the fig-leaf is gone with the wind, and honour became a whore.

KOVACS: So now you regret it all?

COLONEL: No, I don't regret anything. It's only my hands, that are shaking, can you see, my boy? Some years more, and I will not be able to put out my cigarette alone. I am a sick man, I should not drink this piss either. The only thing I regret, maybe, that no one from my family have become to be a decent man.

KOVACS: Decent man?

COLONEL: (whispers) Maybe I have paid too much attention on myself.

KOVACS: How calmly you can talk about these things, how calm you can be. How calm. Nobody feels anything indeed, except for me.

COLONEL: I am not calm. I just lie down on my bed at home, and all my thoughts get mingled in my mind. The gaps are running in the walls, like a net, and I am caught in it. I'm not calm. Maybe I have far too many memories, and they have been munching on my soul. My anger gets to be bigger and bigger, and it drinks my blood.

KOVACS: We talk too much. Let's drink instead.

COLONEL: Anyway all has been lost and vanished, and I feel ashamed. My dear boy, I dreadfully liked to live here. One's worst memories can become to be the most darling ones. My only right that is left is: to march in the front.

KOVACS: I am afraid, it's only the vodka and dullness, Colonel, that is left for us. You are a gentleman, and there are not so many of them among us these days.

COLONEL: And then why the hell do you long for being back again in the service? Explain it to me.

KOVACS: This is what I learnt.

COLONEL: Dealing with weapons? And what else?

KOVACS: (silent) Don't distress me, Colonel. I am not that wrong.

BOY: (comes)

COLONEL: Am I shouting? Hm? Why shouldn't I? Who could forbid me to do what I want?

BOY: Let's go home. Please. I Have already asked for a taxi. It is waiting outside. You are tired, Daddy.

COLONEL: Tired...I am drunk like a beast, boy. I am fucking drunk again. (He lets himself be driven away)

KOVACS: (falls asleep leaning on the table)

(Julia, Colonel and the Boy, by the entrance)

JULIA: Colonel...

COLONEL: (drunk) Madam?

JULIA: Excuse me for holding you up for a minute. You may have known me, like I know you by sight. I work here as a dancer...

COLONEL: No problem at all, just go ahead. What is it you want to say?

JULIA: Lieutenant Kovacs, whom you were talking to before, is my husband. First of all I would like to ask you not to tell him, that we met.

COLONEL: You are embarrassed, I swear.

JULIA: I know, what hurts my husband the most. I know, what he was like before, and what he has become since then...His trial, what he had... I know, that he made a mistake, but...Colonel, if there was a retrial...

COLONEL: (laughs) Retrial?!

JULIA: (notices, that he is drunk) If you wanted, you could help us.

COLONEL: You were waiting for me by the entrance. How nice.

JULIA: What could I say to you...

COLONEL: I swear, I do not know, what you want from me.

JULIA: Your concern...

COLONEL: This lieutenant of yours...

JULIA: Your word carries weight everywhere....

COLONEL...was dealing with Russian weapons. (laughs)

JULIA: Are you making fun of me?

COLONEL: Who cares, what he did? But it was a big mistake, that he got caught at the end.

JULIA: It disappoints me to see you in this state. So we will not have an understanding, I suppose.

COLONEL: (pinches her cheek) I feel sorry for you, instead, sweet lady. As this Lieutenant Kovacs is... eh, just a young chap... he will survive.

(Alone at the same place)

JULIA: (goes in sadly) I would walk on sparkling ashes barefoot, just to save him. He is drunk, too, my little outlaw...His forehead is sweating. I wonder if he is dreaming about me. (pats him, the lieutenant looks up at her)

(Julia and Rita, at the dressing-room)

RITA: I almost do not dare to touch them, not to burst them like bubbles.

JULIA: I got this bracelet from him long time ago.

RITA: Long time ago...everything turns to be past one time... and finally all is gone to hell.

JULIA: He does not love me, does not love me any more, I know. How could I keep him?

RITA: Nice pearls, really nice pearls. Do not ever sell them. He is very generous, pays, like an officer...

JULIA: One they, when it comes these can be yours.

RITA: (does not pay attention) Let them pay, let them all pay. (apathetically) Why should someone get married for? Answer me!

JULIA: I feel sick these days, I even vomited this morning.

RITA: The juggler has come back. Three more minutes, Julietta.

JULIA: My grandmother was Armenian, did I ever get to tell you that? That's why my eyes are so dark.

RITA: Don't cry, honey, don't cry. Those bastards, are they worth to cry for?

JULIA: I was different before, too. Do you know all the time, what you do and why you do it?

RITA: Your abortion last year. Do you still feel guilty for that?

JULIA: I wanted it. I feel like shit. And now? What if I was pregnant again?

RITA: Do you have remorse?

JULIA: Who would not have? To tell you the truth he did not want the baby, he just wanted me to stop dancing. I do not understand anything at all now.

RITA: Mark your eyes again.

JULIA: Tell me, do I still look pretty?

(Julia, alone)

JULIA: When will I learn, that it is not just me, who can have her wishes. Men deserve more, than dogs. And is it clear for me, what I wanted at all in the past? What a miserable life it is! I feel like crying, and I keep lifting my legs on the stage. Isn't it weird? I feel as if everything was decaying. I treated him really badly. It's only me, who can conclude, that God has punished me. God has punished me by the gift of knowing all. I wanted to take good care of myself, but why one need a body, when worms are going to rut in it at the end. Who could I say anything? Almighty God, I feel so lonely. Why does everything make all the same to me at once? (sobs)

(Rita and the Boy in a room with drawn curtains)

RITA: (looks at the boy, then hugs him convulsively) You. little crap... my tiny little baby.

BOY: (struggles to get out of her arms) And you? How long is this going to continue like that? Or don't you love me any more?

RITA: I love you in my way, but you know that. My dear...

BOY: Tell me, do you trust me? Cross your heart! If you and me...

RITA: Yes? Tell it, dear. Yes?

(Two in the dressing room)

KOVACS: (holding Julia in his arm) Are you scared? Julia? By my side? You should leave this place, I think.

JULIA: But I am a dancer.

KOVACS: I wish if you would be waiting for me all day. Is it too much to ask?

JULIA: I wait for you all day this way as well.

KOVACS: Anyone would be daring enough to even rob a bank for you.

JULIA: (patting him) I would not like you to do things like that.

KOVACS: I would kill for you also.

JULIA: (laughs)

KOVACS: Anything, anything, my angel. Does it mean anything at all for you?

JULIA: Great morals! The family loving gangster, who is waited for home by his housewife with hot meals...

KOVACS: Or should I rather be a minister? Don't you feel, that we hold the future in our hands now? What would you say, if one day we would become rich all of a sudden? Hm?

JULIA: (laughs)

KOVACS: Suppose a fairy dwarf...! (takes her in his lap)

(Julia and a fortune teller woman, late in the evening)

GYPSY WOMAN: Why are you disturbing my solitude, young miss?

JULIA: Tell me the future! Tell me, what will be my fate?

GYPSY WOMAN: Do not tempt God. Don't want to know, what not so many of us knows.

JULIA: I will pay you.

GYPSY WOMAN: Let me see your palm. Thirst of knowledge, will accomplish, hand in hand, seen ahead. Flames of candle, tell the future.

JULIA: What can you see? Why don't you speak?

GYPSY WOMAN: It is all mixed up, difficult to explain. I can see a man, who smiles like a dog. It is hard to tell, whether he is flattering, or he is just about to bite. I can see a woman, too. Do not expect any good, miss. It is a dim line, not so easy to tell, where it runs...

JULIA: Why did you stop speaking again? I pay you. Talk!

GYPSY WOMAN: I have nothing more to say.

JULIA: You cannot say more, or you do not want to say more?

GYPSY WOMAN: It is all the same for you. Now, take a leave, miss. If you can afford to pay me, leave it in the hat, if you can't, never mind.

Act II.

(Two on the street)

FORIS: So this is it. The Rusty Rooster Night Club. You see? I have been looking around inside. There is plenty of money in a safe waiting for us. It will be all right. What do you think? Are you dumb?

KOVACS: The Rusty Rooster? Man, it is impossible.

FORIS: Why would it be impossible, if everything is possible. You have to make up your mind. The party is still going on, soon there will be silence. Tomorrow they can cry in vain. At least one will be fucking sad. I know the owner.

KOVACS: There is a night-guard, and a dog at the back, too.

FORIS: Never mind, he is deaf and blind.

KOVACS: The man needs money, the dog needs poison. We have to wrap the poison in a piece of bloody meat. The dog will munch on that. Phi. It is wild, I tell you, it is wild.

FORIS: Tomorrow the girls have a day off, they sit back at home, and we shall hold the party here.

KOVACS: What if there will be a full-moon tomorrow night? Or what if the guard wakes up, and calls for the dog?

FORIS: The guard will be your problem, if anything like that happens. I hope, you did not misunderstand me. Hm? I do hope.

KOVACS: Let us get away from here. The sky looks like a glass of hundred colours. It is dawn. The dog is over there, coming and going. It is looking this way. Is there nobody with him? Should we do it now?

FORIS: Tomorrow, tomorrow. We shall finish you, Rusty Rooster. Ha?

KOVACS: Come on, come on! They will come out in a minute, and find us here in the courtyard.

FORIS: Well, we just came in to piss. Hm? Look around, look around carefully. I shall be made rich by this stuff, and let's pour boiling water on the fucking Rooster. I have weird memories of this place really horrid ones.

KOVACS: And what if, what if the moon will shine tomorrow as bright as it does today?

FORIS: Let us walk around. And tomorrow, ...hm?

(Bandi and the Boy)

BANDI: So, your duty is over, isn't it? I know that it is much for you. Far too much. Will you go to sleep right away?

BOY: Yes, after I got home.

BANDIKA: It is dangerous to walk on the streets at this time at dawn.

Take care. And avoid bad company. Do you hear me? Go straight home.

BOY: But what if I don't want to go home straight?

BANDIKA: You almost made me frightened by what you have just said. Avoid bad people. It is so easy to get into trouble. And nobody cares what was the cause, and what was the consequence. And you get in trouble. Do you hear me? Keep away from bad company.

(Two in the morning in the dressing room)

KOVACS: Julia? Where is she?

RITA: How should I know? She is supposed to come in soon.

KOVACS: It is great. She can never be there where I look for her. It is time to put her in her place.

RITA: Are you pissed off?

KOVACS: Maybe. And what is wrong with you?

RITA: I would not like you to come in here again without knocking first. Or you should say hello at least.

KOVACS: The question is how should I say hello. (kisses her)

RITA: Do not ever try this again.

KOVACS: I swear...I fancy you even more like this.

RITA: You'd better keep out of my sight. You know, what I mean, old chap.

KOVACS: What if I don't get what you mean?

RITA: At least you should stop grinning.

(Keglevich and Kovacs)

KEGLEVICH: Once upon a time, there was a young couple... Do you still draw pictures at all?

KOVACS: (reading a small piece of paper) Not any more, I Don't have time. And I don't feel like drawing. Do you know the Baron? He invited me to Austria, to take vodka to Vienna.

KEGLEVICH: You'd better keep out of things like that. You have already got too much on your record.

KOVACS: There is nothing wrong with this. Don't you think? He needs me, because... (thinks) It is risky only until it's get done. Am I right? Do you think, I should not go there?

(dark) I have a bad premonition. Everything is so chaotic. Like, when someone starts to hum, hoping that nobody notices that he has been talking to himself. (drops the piece of paper, then grins) I know the address.

KEGLEVICH: At least you should be nervous. You already failed on a business transaction.

KOVACS: (shrugs his shoulder) In the past. (laughs) I didn't give a shit for the whole thing.

KEGLEVICH: You will come to a bad end, Kovacs.

KOVACS: (to himself) You are all scared. Just chatter, if you wish. And I do, what I have to do. (swings on the chair) I blow a bride of smoke for myself. She is very attractive, one ring for her legs, one ring for her breasts. (inhales the cigarette) Her neck is like a swan's, her hip swings from here to there, her ankle is forms a fine line.

KEGLEVICH: (blows the smoke away) Do you still have that drawing, when Julia...

KOVACS: The house is empty, the bride is gone, has turned to smoke. (thinks) Of course, you were crazy about her. And she liked you too. Am I right? Until I showed up on the stage. Hm? It is good, that you are silent at least. Love, my friend, is a dirty affair. Love, my friend, does not even exist. Ha? Only women experience love, they find male names for their future. But I believe neither in future nor in past. Dirty affair. We can never get rest anyway. Never, never.

KEGLEVICH: Your Julia is a beautiful girl.

KOVACS: If she is so beautiful, it is even worse for her. Big trouble.

KEGLEVICH: And your Julia is clever, too.

KOVACS: I wish, sometimes arguing were not overcome her.

KEGLEVICH: She is lovely, bright, faithful and caring, buddy. You have got damn luck with her, you should not loose it.

KOVACS: She is mine, I paid for her till the end.

KEGLEVICH: My heart is heavy if I think of you. Kovacs, how can you live like this?

KOVACS: One lives as one can. (looks out of the window) The sky is like a hammer, it is about to fall on my head. Should not I go there tomorrow?

KEGLEVICH: It has clouded up again...snow clouds. (thinks about something else) You should attend a high school, buddy.

KOVACS: God will pull his locks aside from his forehead, and see how mean this world has become, how mean, filthy and jealous. But it makes no difference. One day, two days, and I will be over with everything.

KEGLEVICH: You could become an architect., for example.

KOVACS: One day, another day then it is over, isn't it? (looking at the piece of paper) Sometimes I start to feel giddy. As if the letters were worms, and the paper had a wound-fever. (crinkles it again) We just do this jive talking. I do not want to stay in this country in any case.

KEGLEVICH: You leave. All right. And where do you think your leaving will lead you ?

KOVACS: What links me here?

KEGLEVICH: Stop gassing. Yet, what will become of you? What will be your future?

KOVACS: (makes faces) Future is not what it used to be any more. One would rather take a rabbit run, and... Isn't this cowardice?

KEGLEVICH: No, it is selfishness. But it was you, who used to call me selfish.

KOVACS: That's what you are, just like Julia, and so many of you. The only problem with selfish people is that they care for themselves more, than for me. (grins provocatively)

KEGLEVICH: You are still a child. It is all right now, but in ten years time, you will have to find another excuse.

KOVACS: I will be always like that. Always! I have been like that and I will always be. I am immortal! (laughs) Temporarily.

(Julia and Kovacs in the room, in the morning)

JULIA: (irons and sings)

I won't be my mother's Jack

I won't be my father's Jack

I will be the fiddler's wife

To have a little tune,

To have a little tune

To have a little tune.

KOVACS: What a silly song is this? How could I get out of this pickle... I will have to work, that's for sure. I will love my work very much. Can you hear me? I will love it, whatever it will be. I get suffocated here, in this hole.

JULIA: Shall I make a tea?

KOVACS: You will have to leave soon. Aren't your feet cold standing bare footed on this floor, my angel?

JULIA: I've got used to it.

KOVACS: (looking at the wall opposite the house) Bricks in the wall. Just like a parade under arms. They are red, as if they were all ashamed. I wish you were my wife actually. I wish we were happy! Till you are a dancer I will not marry you.

JULIA: I will make a tea I've changed my mind.

KOVACS: She is weeping now again. There. Obviously because of love.

JULIA: How funny you are.

KOVACS: It's time for you to leave.

JULIA: You have been staring at that bulkhead for weeks.

KOVACS: (To himself): Do you also believe, that I am a parasite? Hm? Just escape from me. As if I had a clap.

JULIA: I couldn't get what you said.

KOVACS: Never mind. I am enjoying myself pretty good sometimes. If it wasn't for you, I would already be clapped by the heels presumably. (ironically) How could I express my gratitude?

JULIA: You don't have to.

KOVACS: But I need to.

JULIA: Stop it.

KOVACS: No, really.

JULIA: Relax for a while, please.

KOVACS: But I am so bloody grateful.

JULIA: (bursts out) Leave me alone, please. You have been coming home drunk for days.

KOVACS: Me?

JULIA: Lets just drop it.

KOVACS: Then what? Is it forbidden? Don't you answer me? I guess, it is bugging you.

JULIA: Just keep on laughing.

KOVACS: I am in a jolly good mood.

JULIA: And do you have a reason for it?

KOVACS: But after all I am in love. And a pretty woman is in love with me! Why should not I be merry. (it is not obvious, whether he is mocking or not) I would not change even with the king.

JULIA: I am glad.

KOVACS: The most lovely girl in the world is ironing my shirts.

JULIA: ...Please...

KOVACS: She washes my clothes, so I won't be unwashed. I wish my words would not be dirty once in a while. My pronunciation! After all, the suburbs...

JULIA: You set me at naught.

KOVACS: Too much complaints, too many sighs. You fan my love to a heat. If you knew, that I am seized by twinges of conscience. After all I have a feeling heart. I look at you now and then, and say to myself. This girl would deserve better. This girl would deserve nicer. Life has set you up my love.

JULIA: Do you think, that you are amusing now?

KOVACS: That I set you at naugh! Ah! I set you very high, far too high. You've never left me in trouble, have you. I want to make myself clear, the Colonel will show up at your place tonight, though his mistress has turned him out. So he will be alone there drinking there in a leisurely mood. I know all of his habits. Be nice to him, honeybunch, very nice.

JULIA: What do you mean?

KOVACS: A clever girl knows what I stress.

(At the night club, Old Man, Julia and Kovacs sitting by the table)

OLD MAN: (goes up to her) Can I buy you a drink, miss?

JULIA: (nicely) No, thank you.

OLD MAN (leaves, disguising his disappointment)

KOVACS: How nice are you to all the people around.

JULIA: It belongs to my job, dear.

KOVACS: Am I harming your business?

JULIA: You should quit doing this.

KOVACS: Am I going on your nerves?

JULIA: Yes, you are.

KOVACS: (Just like a kid) Listen...do you still love me?

JULIA: (with tears in her eyes) You, silly boy.

KOVACS: (holds her tight) Sometimes... I am afraid, that you do not love me any more.

(others are watching them)

(Same place)

KOVACS: What the heck, he hasn't come.

JULIA: Who?

KOVACS: At least it is just the two of us.

JULIA: I have twenty minutes more.

KOVACS: You seem to be relieved.

JULIA: Listen...

KOVACS: What?

JULIA: Do I look pale?

KOVACS: Maybe.

JULIA: It is because of the lights.

KOVACS: Your friend is a foxy girl.

JULIA: Rita?

KOVACS: You should recommend me warmly to her.

JULIA: (after a while) Do you like her?

KOVACS: You look confused.

(at the same place)

KOVACS: (with an angel look) Now, tell me, what made you so sad. We have always discussed all the things, don't you remember?

JULIA: That's right, lieutenant.

KOVACS: You need a hat for saluting. Wait a minute.

JULIA: Do you remember, when you taught me that?

KOVACS: The garrison is close, there is always one on the hat-peg. Well, well.

JULIA: Does it fit me?

KOVACS: (smirks like a naughty boy) This turns me on, like hell.

JULIA: (with a naive smile) So you are still interested in this. Do you like me? Huh?

KOVACS: You need a belt, too.

JULIA: And lieutenant, what about my needs?

KOVACS: What else do you need, honey. for happiness?

JULIA: Will you be nicer to me from this time on?

KOVACS: Of course, why shouldn't I be? Am I not nice enough to you right now?

JULIA: At times something is missing.

KOVACS: Missing or kissing, what's the difference.

JULIA: Kissing?

KOVACS: Yes, let's...

JULIA: But lieutenant! We are not in private.

(At the same place)

JULIA: You still love me, right?

KOVACS: Shall I declare my love to you?

JULIA: Well, it has been a long time when you last did.

KOVACS: But we have just stated, that I like Rita. How would it fit?

JULIA: Well, in case you make a little effort.

KOVACS: Don't you want to eat?

JULIA: I never eat this time of the day.

KOVACS: Have a bite of mine.

JULIA: Beefsteak? No, thanks. It is rare.

KOVACS: Please, just for my sake. You will become completely weak.

JULIA: (laughs) A little?

KOVACS: Just one bite.

JULIA: (eats) I don't feel like eating.

KOVACS: If you eat it all, I will tell you what I think of you truly. I promise.

JULIA: (listens) What do you mean truly?

KOVACS: Are not you curious what do I look like from the inside? Have you ever seen me declaring love to you on my knees?

JULIA: To tell you the truth, I Don't feel well.

KOVACS: Don't I mean that much to you? (whispers, in a smooth voice) How easy would it be now, to prove the opposite of it? You like the food, right?

JULIA: (plays, but less cheerfully) I have only one question. Then you can talk.

KOVACS: Delicious, isn't it? Raw, and bloody as well. What a joy is my little dancer! Seeing a beauty like this, makes me think of striking someone dead, just for the pleasure.

JULIA: (weakly) I feel sick.

KOVACS: Eat it all, or don't you like it? My golden bug, honeybunch, little fairy-bird. I am here, by your side, if anything wrong happened to you. Who would dare to harm you? It will taste better, if I stroke you in the meantime, right? Why Don't you talk? What's wrong? I have not seen you eating for days. There must be a reason. We shall improve your appetite, right, sweetheart? Just go on eating.

JULIA (eats struggling with her tears)

KOVACS: Be brave Julia, be brave. Gobble up all the meal, like a pretty vulture. Everybody is smiling? We have found a funny game, you see. Go ahead, and eat, Julia...one more bite, just for my sake.

JULIA (runs away)

KOVACS Can you hear her heaving? (to himself) Disgusting.

(At the same place)

KOVACS: I said you could expect something in case you finished all, and not in case you puke it all.

(Julia just stands there)

(In the room)

JULIA: Your boots are muddy. What is that? Where have you been? I was waiting for you...

KOVACS: We were shooting at stray dogs, my friends and me. It is muddy out there in the suburbs.

JULIA: It is past one o'clock. No, the clock has stopped...

KOVACS: You just toss and turn on the bed, why don't you sleep? Why do you wait for me all the time?

JULIA: You drank too much. Go ahead, and sleep...

KOVACS: Shut up, damn it, or I wipe my boots in you. Black mud on the sheet, that's poetic! Mud and dogs hair, that stinks. One of the beasts almost bit me. They are dangerous! It was shot dead, it was snarling but died.

JULIA: Please, fall asleep. I nestle up to you, you see, like in the old days. Now isn't it better? You will soon fall asleep. You look really pale.

KOVACS: Shut up, I have to think. I have to think badly.

JULIA: You were crying out last night...

KOVACS: What? In my sleep? I hate when you overhear what I say...

JULIA: Take off your boots, love, you would go to sleep earlier. Or do you want me to do that?

KOVACS: The Colonel? Right, that's right. He grins at me a lot. That's right, well done, my little bitch.

JULIA: I cannot stand it any more...

KOVACS: You do, what I say. You will do it with him no matter, how often, if I wish you to.

JULIA: It is almost dawn, please, go to sleep. If you Don't get any sleep, you will be rude and exhausted.

KOVACS: Just go ahead, and groan, whimper, grab your pillow, that's right. You will do it with the judge-advocate major as well. That major watched you last time, he liked you a lot.

Julia: Never...

KOVACS: Are you disgusted? He isn't any better or worse than me. You have your uses anyway...Or will you be rubbed away? You have to do what I tell you to do, this is the rule of the world.

JULIA: Listen, I will never do that.

KOVACS: Since when has it been a habit for you to say no to me? Is it the new fashion, to let the rabbit carry the gun? How long has it been a fashion to interrupt me? Soon I will be crouching in the corner, and effacing myself, like a beast, right? And I will be trembling even by the sight of you? Am I going to receive your guests in a uniform just like a butler? Your voice is getting stronger, so it is time for me to keep quiet. Am I rig? Shall I be your groom, your servant, your pet dog?

JULIA: You drive yourself crazy...

KOVACS But it is impossible to achieve to keep her mouth shut. I can't help hearing her voice. She keeps nagging me all the time...she blames me everywhere she goes. You are talking about me, the way I treat you. Bad, huh? God has punished me with you, stinky harlot.

JULIA: It's enough. Sleep.

KOVACS: (mocking her) You talk to me on a smooth voice all day long. You know the ways how to affect me. And when it is not working, my sweet Julia gives orders. I won't

stand it any longer, I won't stand it, I suffered enough, and I had to swallow my anger. I won't endure it! One more word and I'll kill you.

JULIA: Are you crazy? Take your hands off me! You are wild. Where are you dragging me?

KOVACS: Have you been beaten up, like that? Huh? It was high time, to teach you manners. It was high time to get you in my hands. It was the time for you to understand what happens, if you cross the line.

JULIA: (looks up at him from the floor, her matted hair is in her face) I hate you so much!

KOVACS: Can you see, what you have done? This pig-sty is a mess, the mirror has fallen down, the chair has turned over, and the small vase is broken in pieces. Come on, sweep the floor, otherwise...

JULIA: I cannot stand up. I have hurt myself. (laughs in pain) The puppet has fallen off.

KOVACS: Do you want me to make you stand up? Do you? Look, what you have done!

JULIA: My hair! It hurts! Leave me alone.

KOVACS: I am exhausted. (sinks on the bed)

JULIA: (grunts, holds the legs of the lieutenant)

KOVACS: (strokes her) Do you go to work, Don't you. I will wait for you. Come back home soon. (struggles) Why do you look at me, like that, sweetheart?

(in the street)

I. CITIZEN: The silence crawls slowly on the town, and devours the noises, the night has arrived. Can you hear? They are having fun over there. The party is in full swing. Is it just me, who feels, that sleepiness purrs at each step, lies on our way and flatter us. Let's go to sleep.

II. CITIZEN: I am too lazy to listen and to watch, I keep saying to myself, what's the use of hearing and seeing so much? But you must. Things just happen day after day. I wonder how could so many things happen all the time. I could swear, if it comes to my mind, but why there are so many things to happen.

I. CITIZEN: One's mood can change. You say this today, and something else tomorrow. Once you just laugh and laugh, then you could just groan and cry pointlessly. All the things are mixed up all the time, and everything seems to be aimless, you see. Every single part of your body wants to live, but why. They all have to die at the end. Live or dead, phew. One just wants to ask: if we lived, what for?

II. CITIZEN: What does one know, if he does not even know this? For nothing. It is better to realise it. Sooner or later man from skin to bone will be pressed in stone by disappointment. His flesh is made of disillusionment, his nerves are made of "makes no difference". At the end there is nothing to keep them together, but the everyday routine that is the advantage of the beasts. All the glow-worms are heading towards the zenith, and they seek for glory. Isn't it better just sleep along? Come, let's continue what we have partly started, that's what nights are for. Good night, my lord, sweet dreams.

I. CITIZEN: Good night to you as well.

II. CITIZEN: Good night, I say, sleep tight, and don't let the bed-bugs bite you. (laughs)

(Kovacs alone)

KOVACS: It has just been my reflecting in the mirror that followed me so far. Well men are always left alone at the end. What a silly thing, my heart is beating so fast. Come on! (looks at the sky) The sun is rising. That son of a bitch left me. They are all suspicious! (spits) Tomorrow, I will do it myself.

(at the night-club)

BANDI: What's wrong with you, darling? Shall I ask for a handsome guy to court you a little? I cannot stand to see my babies being sad.

JULIA: What do you notice, Bandi, what do you notice at all? Nothing. Your mind is haunted by your beer and your artists. What kind of a boss are you? No one believes you when you try to please the girls.

BANDI: (jolly) On the other hand, in case you are pregnant you are fired, you know.

JULIA: The less your hair is, the darker your thoughts are, Bandi. You should care more for yourself. Put on something different than this checked jacket. The guest are calling you "fat bagman" behind your back. You are dripping with money.

BANDI: (into the mirror) Ladies and gentlemen! I have make up on, please Don't give a shit. My hair is permed, oops, it is not mine. Shit. It's a wig.

(The show. Tableau vivant)

BANDI: Or do you hate the capitalist bastards in top-hats, who smoke cigars the smell of which stings the proles? The rich people have fun all day and long legged girls hold them in their arms. Hm ? But who cares for his tear that he sheds, seeing a couple kissing? Ladies and gentlemen! Love is a big attraction! Fair attraction! But ah, it does not pay off. Nice ride. Love is weeping in front, the Rooster is laughing behind. Clap! Clap! (throws tokens from Fortuna's lap)

(in the room)

KOVACS: Keep your guts. We have got home finally. But it is time for you to close your eyes. I hate to see the image of my face flirting in it. And my eyes? I wonder what they show...

RITA: I can see your heart beating in your eyes. Your heart is blue. It is half indigo, half cobalt.

KOVACS: The heart of a soldier is made of paper, according to the regulation. And they say it is folded and stuck together by mouth water. But you know nothing about it, miss.

RITA: Your eyes, lieutenant, are like troubled water, milk-white sky in a shade. Well, well now you knit your precious eyebrows.

KOVACS: You chat too much. Have you been drinking?

RITA: Otherwise I might not be here. Otherwise I might not even notice these lieutenants. But I usually don't drink. Never. Bandi fires those, who are zauf. He's going to kick my ass, pretty soon, too. Take my boots off. Eh, what are you laughing at? Go to hell.

KOVACS: But the ideals, Rita, the ideals! The fame! I have to pull up these socks. Yes, I am full of ambitions. So I cannot go to hell, because I don't believe in hell. There are no devils either, devil is just my shadow, it is just you and me.

RITA: Wait, I don't feel like doing it yet.

KOVACS: You are difficult. Why did I have to pick out just you from the chorus? Well, because I like you. That's why. But I wish you were less peevish.

RITA: How nice plant Julia grows in here! I love flowers. (stares at a bunch of flower)
Life is great.

KOVACS: My mistress is a scent, holds me in her arms.

RITA: This is blue, knapweed... this rose is red. Red-blue, it means Paris. (clapping)
Paris! (pickingly) I am faithful to my fiancé.

KOVACS: I know it all right. Those girls who are faithful to their lovers Don't have this shine in their eyes. They have no shine at all...

RITA: You make me weaker and weaker...

(Julia and Bandi while she is removing her make up)

JULIA: I may leave your club, Bandi.

BANDI: You? You will leave it, that's for sure. I will miss you. But these girls, like you, never stay long here.

JULIA: At least you can mourn me.

BANDI: I will do it right. Where is my black tuxedo. (Plays the clown, jumps grins and makes faces)

JULIA: (laughs)

(At the same place)

BANDI: (listening excitedly) Can you hear? Again and again. Who would not jump out of his skin ?

JULIA: Discharged soldiers.

BANDI: Maybe...You, rascals will also be unemployed, he-he.

JULIA: You will be relieved. Last week again they smashed the furniture in your club, Bandi.

BANDI: They broke my big mirror to pieces, those ruffians...Would not it be better for me to go to somewhere else? What can I do here...(peeps out) But who can be the master of his own heart?

JULIA: So that's why? That boy... And he knows nothing about is, does he? I have to admit...he is good-looking, good-looking.

BANDI: Then what?

(in the room, Julia, Kovacs and Rita)

KOVACS: Why do you keep on crying? Why? What did you think, how long can I endure this? All that you are doing to me, you bitch.

JULIA: Rita! Why did he have to pick you...

RITA: What should I say?

JULIA: Nothing.

KOVACS: That's right, nothing. How could I call myself a man, if I was to be responsible to Julia. Who is such a...

JULIA: Oh, God, I cannot take it any longer.

KOVACS: Cry, as always.

JULIA: I did love you, bloody bastard...

KOVACS: You do have to love me, you owe me with your emotions. This is your duty till your parting breath.

RITA: Why do you pretend as if you had not suspected a thing.

JULIA: I suspected it, I really did. Even more, I knew it. But not, that it was going to be you... Well after all it makes no difference...

KOVACS: Control your mouth.

RITA: I would not wish this to happen again, not even to my enemy...what do you think? Is it a pleasure? I have lost my infatuation for you forever.

KOVACS: Shut up, you slut. And get out!

RITA: Do you give me the gate, you pimp. Look into my eyes if you can. Take care, your eyes will betray you. You behave like a groom with women... What is the problem with you, boy?

KOVACS: Get out of here. Nobody is listening to you. And look out! I can't stand when someone's eyes are flashing like that.

RITA: And you? You just keep silent? Oh miserable you...and I felt pity for you.

JULIA: Leave me alone, please, both of you.

RITA: (to Julia) What are you waiting for? Come with me...

JULIA: (serious) Get out.

RITA: Fuck off! Stupid bitch. (shuts the door)

(same room, Julia and Kovacs)

KOVACS: (practices throwing knife to the door, lying on bed)

JULIA: The cup is full now, you know.

KOVACS: (on a low voice) Julia, yes, Julia. It is her all the time. Julia and her flowers. Julia and her lieutenant. Do you still believe that you can buy everything? You treat me like a dog, right? The doggy is sad, his master is not pleasing him. She is making money. She is having company. She is going out with her friends. How can a dog flatter his master, Julia? He rubs against the legs of his master. What does a doggy, want, Julia? Anything would do. I am your pat, you made a mistake to choose me, and now you are sorry. It must be a burden, of course, having somebody waiting for you all day,

and you don't feel like rushing back home. (like an angel) Have you had enough of me?
Let's have a divorce...

JULIA: (smashes a glass to him, screams) You fucking selfish son of a bitch!

KOVACS (Jumps) Oh, what is going on? Well, well, the puppet has turned to be alive. It is good to see, that there is blood in your heart after all, not just sawdust in a bag.

Ladies and Gentlemen! This woman seems to be more than just an idiot. This lovely, empty head...Can you see! My words, my lectures finally have been taken.

JULIA (sobs on her knees)

KOVACS: (lifts her head grabbing her hair, not very gentle. Whispers smoothly) Do you still want to get a divorce? Answer me!

JULIA: (mascara is running down her face) I feel so lonely.

KOVACS: (sits next to her on the floor, and wraps her face with a tissue.
Smiles. Julia keeps crying)

(At the night-club, the Boy, and Keglevich)

(Additional scene)

BOY: Yes, sir?

KEGLEVICH: I am looking for lieutenant Kovacs. Do you know him?

BOY: Yes, Julia's husband...he ripped this medallion of her neck yesterday, and threw it to the wall. If I saw Julia I would give it back to her.

KEGLEVICH: So he paid her with the Holy Mary, didn't he? He can be wild. I will give it to her.

BOY: I could not care less what he is like. There he comes. (leaves)

KEGLEVICH: (playing with the chain) What a prematurely old face. He will make an ill-looking old man, or an early dead man.

(Kovacs and Keglevich)

KOVACS: This silence is so suspicious, that I would like to cry out loud.

KEGLEVICH: You left this here yesterday.

KOVACS: Ah. Anywhere I go I don't feel like even to get seated.

KEGLEVICH: I made up my mind to talk to you.

KOVACS: But I do not talk to you.

KEGLEVICH: Then whom do you talk to? Eh! Hey, boy! Waiter! Where did he go? Is he dead or just deaf?

KOVACS: It is quite probable, that they do not serve drunk people. But which of us is drunk? It is hot in here, damn it. I am sweating. This heat will drive me mad soon.

KEGLEVICH: It is rather cold in here. It is the evil that heated you up, I can tell. You are walking on thin ice, Kovacs.

KOVACS: I can trust you only. If you tell me lies...!

KEGLEVICH: Hold your Julia, not me!

KOVACS: She is a slut, don't even remind me of her. You are cursing even by saying her name, Julia.

KEGLEVICH: (plays with the chain) She is a fine girl, a lovely girl. You could leave her for me in your will.

KOVACS: She is a hooker, a slut. I know her inside out. If I want her, she will do it with you as well. If I want it, so it will be.

KEGLEVICH: I go home, and I feel sorry for you.

KOVACS: I know every single bit of her. She has to do, what I say, or... What are you laughing at?

KEGLEVICH: Hey, man, what are you talking about?

KOVACS: (supressedly) It is like I say it is.

KEGLEVICH: At first I want to move to her apartment.

KOVACS: Anyone looks at her, can tell that she was prescribed for me by the doctor. So everything is quite clear, blinding just like the sun.

KEGLEVICH: Tell me, what the hell is wrong with you nowadays? You just keep talking, Kovacs, you keep talking. Pull yourself together.

KOVACS: Chatting is over, let's just drink. Long live the women! Long live all the bitches! (speaks with a halt) I am afraid I will flee from here and I will not be anything. And what memories do I leave behind?

KEGLEVICH: Just like your brothers, right? (shrugs his shoulder) Well, there is no guarantee for that. (turns away)

(at the night-club by the tables)

(Additional scene)

(just like a dream)

COLONEL: Do I bump in you again? Why are you looking at me so maliciously, lieutenant Kovacs?

KOVACS: Herr Colonel, I...I just wanted to say, that...

COLONEL: Well, go ahead! (all the people are laughing an clapping)

KOVACS: (suffering) I have nothing to say.

COLONEL: Could you hear? Could you? This was really smart. (applause)

RITA: (sympathising with him) Get out of here, you miserable creature, you have nothing to do here.

KOVACS: You are drunk again.

RITA: Mind your own business.

COLONEL: Could you hear? She said: mind your own business, he-he. Mind your own business. Bravo! (applause)

(in the room)

KOVACS: It is quite clear for all of us, who you are. You are a dirty bitch. Shameful hooker. You fucked with the Colonel, with the Major, didn't you, darling? We all know who you are.

JULIA: Listen. I am scared.

KOVACS: You brought shame on me, shame. Can this sin be forgiven?

JULIA: You came home late tonight...you are under the influence of your buddies.

KOVACS: Nice face, baby face...I will have to break of the habit of whoring. One has to be sincere, roughly sincere. (pants awkwardly) As our love... is based on this. You love me and I love you, and we can afford anything. Your blood is wrong, it is wrong, the evil lechery has contaminated you, how could I cure you. I have to brand you, to forewarn people to watch out, this brand will tell them that you are the devil, your thigh burns.

JULIA: Please, Don't harm me, I entreat you. Please, please.

KOVACS: Shall I put out this cigarette under your eye? Nice face, baby face...yes, it's will be good. (inhales the cigarette) What an idea, what a splendid idea! I am fighting with the most hideous evil in this war. Will-o'-the-wisp...in your eyes; it will be nice, it will be good, it will be all right. Don't cry, don't cry, I love you, you know.

JULIA: Please...

KOVACS: What did you whisper? What? Tell me, answer me, did you know that I loved you? That I loved you... so much.

JULIA: What did I love in you, what the hell, who knows? Insignificant, everything is insignificant, everything is invalid, everything is a lie: every dating, every flattering, lying in everything. This is what I expected, this future? Oh, mother, how beautiful it used to be, how beautiful. But everything has turned to be only a memory, right? Living on memories is strangling, I cannot live on them any more. I shudder when you enter the room, I desire you that much, then you look at me, and I say I leave you nevertheless. Then my heart is constricted, and I cry for us all night. I am drunk, I am crazy, what shall we do?

KOVACS: It is too late for picking, we have no time, why should we endure the future? What for? Let it just be a dream, am I right?

JULIA: Why have you spoilt me? Why did you love me? I am pregnant. Did not you want it? I will bear a child to you, although you have turned to be nobody, you have turned to be mean, you have turned to be evil. Have you ever been different? It is getting worse everyday and I am facing to nothing. Future is like a wild dog, I am so scared. I wept my eyes red, but tell me, do you deserve that much?

KOVACS: Woo me, and everything will be all right. Flatter me, like you used to. Trust me my little bimbo. (pushes her away) Miserable wretch! I am drunk... Go, or I will deform your pretty face.

(At the same place)

KOVACS: They say, that my face is distorted when I smile. My heart beats up in this smile. (laughs) They say I am evil. Who knows, if they are right? Who knows? I feel fine...

JULIA: Jesus, when will this night be over? When they draw the blinds next door, dawn will be here.

KOVACS: What are you chattering? Hm? What? I have to listen to this all day. Do you know, what this is? Just like a jewellery, it is cold. Fucking breath, leaves blur on it. My gun, my sweetheart, my little baby...

JULIA: You should have returned it.

KOVACS: Should have, should not have...I may well do that, who knows?

He-he, who knows? What? (whispers) Are you scared of me?

JULIA: No...oh, yes. Put it down. Come, lie next to me, please.

KOVACS: Oh, oh, strumpet. Tempting devil. I am my own master. Who could give orders to me? Just me. (shouts) You have been leading me by the nose.

JULIA: What are you talking about?

KOVACS: (grinning) They all want the same, all the same. Everybody wants to rule, lead or deceive others, they are all expect this. But not me. He-he, not me. Your body is hot, your skin burns, am I still allowed to hold you in my arms?

JULIA: Don't play with me.

KOVACS: Fire-arms, set up the flames.

JULIA: Put that down, I am scared of it.

KOVACS: This is the best washing powder that cleans the all the spots on honour. Don't you want me to play? Play you, yourself.

JULIA: Auch, what do you want?

KOVACS: I take the bullets out. You see, this is how you do it...Your life is worth for nothing, anyway. Yours, and of the others as well. There might be still one bullet in the barrel. Who knows? (shoots at her, but the gun only clicks. He laughs)

JULIA: I feel sick. I will not see the rising sun again. My Jesus.

KOVACS: The daily papers... will report that... a drunken officer was cleaning his gun.

JULIA: (low) Jesus, help me.

KOVACS: He was cleaning his gun. (laughs)

JULIA: How pale you are. Your face is all white.

KOVACS: Don't annoy me, don't annoy me!

JULIA: Help! I am losing my strength. Please, somebody, help me!

KOVACS: Your throat is parched. Who are you murmuring here? You amuse me, you harlot. You amuse me for the last time.

JULIA: My God, help me.

KOVACS: You drive me mad! How do you dare to look at me like that?

JULIA: (whimpers) I did a wee.

KOVACS: I have been hating you for so long. I have been holding my anger back. My make me infuriated day after day...

JULIA: Don't wait, for God's sake. Help!

KOVACS: (the side of his mouth trembles) How long have I been hating you, dear me! Do you get it, that you are finished? Is your soul clean as you say? (shoots at her a couple of times)

JULIA: (groans) Help me, oh God.

KOVACS: You had to die, can you get it finally? Your mouth is foaming, bloody foam...why are you groaning? Do you understand me? You had to die. No other way was possible. Hooker, the worst hooker, I just want you to understand me. How could I

talk to your intelligence, Julia, has it gone out already? Shall I shout? Shall I talk louder? Or even more louder? Julia! Julia! Did you understand me, or did you die as stupid as a goose? Anima animalis, silly goose. Well, then, kick the bucket! I shrink with disgust from you. You had died before you could understand me. I hate you, I hate you are a freak. Blue blood, red blood, pulsing spring, dropping scarlet troops, blood in foams, who will clean this mass up? Dear me, what will happen now?

The End