

Rasa Bugavičute-Pēce

Translated into Estonian by Contra

2020

I HAD A COUSIN

Actress. Good evening! My name is Rea, but today I'm playing the author of this play, so today my name is Rasa. I'm from Latvia, I'm 32 years old, I have dark hair that's starting to go grey and when I have to speak in public, I get very nervous, I speak too fast and laugh in the wrong places, so this is why there is a professional actress on the stage today instead of the real 'me'. And with me today is...

Actor. Good evening! Henrik. I'm playing the cousin of the author of this play, that's Rasa, and my name today is Deimantas. I'm from Lithuania. I'm... (*shows how much*) about this tall and have big muscles. Really big muscles and a tattoo across my back, which depicts a strongman breaking free from chains to which he's tied and these chains break and there are ghosts in hoods standing around him and... a professional actor is playing me today, because... I'm dead.

Rasa. I had a cousin.

My mother and Deimantas' father are brother and sister. We've lived 220 kilometres from each other all our lives. I spent my childhood in Salaspils – Latvia, he spent his in Kaunas – Lithuania. But we spent our summer holidays together in Liepāja – Latvia. We spoke in Lithuanian, as he also had a brother, my small cousin Deividas, and since there were two of them speaking Lithuanian, I as the minority had to adapt. Deimantas understood Latvian, but couldn't say more than...

Deimantas. Saldējums, Kārums, lūdzu and paldies. (*The words that Henrik actually knows in Latvian could be said here*)

Rasa. And then... at the age of 27, on the night of 7 November 2015, Deimantas was shot dead.

Deimantas. Fun fact – it was done by two Estonians...

Pause

Rasa. *(To the audience.)* No, you don't have to feel guilty about this, it just ties us even tighter into this.. very unique Baltic chain and makes me ask again and again – how could it happen...

(To Deimantas) How... how could it happen...?

Deimantas. Well, yes, on the night of the sixth of November 2015, I was on my way home. In Kaunas, Lithuania. I was living in a new part of the city, in a rented terraced house. You could get to the territory of the house through automatic gates. We drove up to the gates, I stopped the car, pressed the button on the remote to open the gate, and suddenly a man with a covered face dashed out of a silver car towards me. Just a little while ago I played bowling with Vita and her friend, just a little while ago I pulled up to the house in my Mercedes Benz S320, just a little while ago I'd put my hand on Vita's knee. But this man just pointed his gun at me, like it was nothing, and shot me. His colleague then joined him. I think Vita screamed at me to drive off, I don't know. They shot me 12 times and I was hit by eight 9-millimetre bullets. *(Shows on his chest where the bullets hit him.)* Here, here, here, here, here, here, here. And one of them hit the chain around my neck. The chain broke and the bullet entered my neck. Here. I was dead in the blink of an eye. It was a contract killing.

Rasa. It's crazy – someone wanted you gone so badly that they paid for it.

Deimantas. Yes, some sources say it was two hundred thousand euros ..

Rasa. Two hundred thousand...

Deimantas. It's not as if I don't know why it was necessary to get rid of me.

Rasa. I and Deimantas were the same age. I was born on 25 January 1988, he on 22 March. There were two months between us and all through his childhood, Deimantas couldn't stand the fact that he was younger than me. Two months! And still younger. I really enjoyed this fact. However, he'll never get old now and I will go grey without him. It drives me crazy.

(To Deimantas.) You must do as I tell you! I'm older.

Deimantas. I don't care!

Rasa. I'm older.

Deimantas. Yes. By two months.

Rasa. That doesn't change anything! I'm just older.

Deimantas. I don't care.

Rasa. Yes, you do! You must obey older people.

Deimantas. I'm never going to obey you.

Rasa. Yes you will!

Deimantas. No.

Rasa. Yes!

Deimantas. No!

Rasa. Yes!

Deimantas. But you'll die earlier!

Rasa. No.

Deimantas. Yes!

Rasa. It's a no then?

Deimantas. It's a yes then?

Rasa. No.

Deimantas. Yes.

Rasa. No!

Deimantas. Yes.

Rasa. No! (*Quickly.*) Whatever you say, I have one more!

Deimantas is mad, he doesn't know what to say, so he sticks out his tongue and blows a raspberry. Rasa does the same.

Pause. Both look out of the window.

Rasa. When we were five years old, we faced death for the first time. Our nanna died. Great grandmother. She was 93 years old, and there seemed nothing supernatural about her death. Only the fact that she was alone somewhere – don't-know-where – seemed supernatural. I couldn't figure out whether she had left us or we had left her. I don't remember Deimantas and I ever talking about it...

Deimantas suddenly taps the window with his finger...

Deimantas. See where that star is! See where it is!

Rasa. Where?

Deimantas. There! You see? (*Taps the glass with his finger.*) Shining!

Rasa. I can't see it.

Deimantas. Well, there! You see?

Rasa. Wait... (*squints, concentrates. Sees the star.*) Indeed...

Deimantas. I told you there's a shining star! Ha!

Rasa. It's also moving like... Just a little...

Deimantas. (*Checks whether it really moves, agrees.*) Oh, right... Maybe we're governed by giants.

Rasa. What giants?

Deimantas. Well, I don't know... The kind that make us look so tiny, tiny, tiny, like grains of sand – so tiny... (*Shows*)

Rasa. Are you afraid of UFOs?

Deimantas. No. What about you?

Rasa. I don't know... (*About the star.*) What if it's an alien spaceship?

Deimantas. (*Looks at the star, wondering.*) I don't think so. But if they were UFOs... No, I'm not afraid... If they landed and I met one of them, I would go like van Damme – like that... (*Shows the moves he would use to punish the aliens*) And then it would know how to behave with me and take me up to its ship and show me the whole sky... I'm sure they speak every language. Or read minds...

Rasa. I'd like it too.

Deimantas. What?

Rasa. To see the whole sky.

Deimantas. I'd take you with me! I would take everyone – mum, dad, brother, grandma Zita, the grandpa with the beard, granny goose, the red granny, the grandpa with the cane, Audra, Rūta, you – everyone.

Rasa. It would be cool...

Deimantas. Do you know what I'd want?

Rasa. Well?

Deimantas. I would like us all to live in a multi-storey building, a tall one with a hundred floors, each of us living on our own floor, and always living together, forever, that nobody would have to die anymore.

Pause.

Rasa. (*To Deimantas*) I would also like that, living together forever, that nobody would have to die anymore.

Deimantas. When I grow up, I'll build a house like that, and we will all live there together, forever.

Rasa. Cool!

Deimantas. Gotcha! I'll live on the hundredth floor.

Rasa. Gotcha! I'll live on the seventh floor.

Deimantas. Well, we'll see...

Rasa. I'll live on the seventh floor, because seven is my favourite number.

Deimantas. Yes, but it's my house and I'll figure out who lives where.

Rasa. But I want to live on the seventh floor!

Deimantas. But it's my house!

Rasa. I'm older and you must do as I tell you...

Deimantas. Granny goose is the oldest right now – she can choose first. And then everyone else who's older than you, and only then you.

Pause

Rasa. OK, I will move to the 17th or the 27th or the 37th or any other floor that ends in seven and is hard for old people to climb to.

Deimantas. Don't be stupid, it'll have a lift...

Pause. Rasa looks at the shining star.

Rasa. I'm getting sleepy...

Deimantas. What?! But we agreed not to sleep!

Rasa. I know! I didn't say I was going to sleep, I just said I was getting sleepy – these are two different things.

Deimantas. You'll fall asleep anyway.

Rasa. No.

Deimantas. Yes! You always fall asleep.

Rasa. No I don't!

Deimantas. Yes you do.

Rasa. You always fall asleep too.

Deimantas. You know what? (*Pause.*)

Rasa. Well? (*Pause, Rasa is waiting.*) Eww! You farted? Yuck... (*Rasa hides under the blanket to escape the fart.*)

Deimantas. You do it now!

They both laugh and roll around in the blanket, because the world is endless.

Rasa. That's how we talked and chatted every night in summer, and farted under the blanket, and imagined how our neighbours were these weird conspirators, certain that we could stay up until the morning, but always falling asleep sooner than we'd intended. Every year and every summer.

We grew up like a kind of DNA spiral – somehow together, somehow in parallel. Every summer, I knew I would have to listen how well Deimantas had done at school and admit that I wasn't doing so well in maths, but I was acing it in French.

Deimantas. Oh la la...

Rasa. Every summer I have to spend a certain number of hours at the piano while Deimantas is doing sports and I don't understand why. Every summer we go to the seaside countless times and every year Deimantas wants to run further and further along the shore. Every summer he wants to swim deeper, deeper and deeper in the sea and I waded with him up to the buoys, although there was this time when I swallowed water so hard I got really scared, but I'll never tell anyone about this.

Deimantas. Respect.

Rasa. Every summer, we watch the same videotapes – some movie about a Spanish army man, Schwarzenegger's films, van Damme's films, two Police Academy films and 'Trudni rebenok'. The best, carefully selected. Year in, year out, until we suddenly turn 15.

We are 15 years old. Rasa is reading a book, Deimantas comes to her, wearing short tracksuit bottoms.

Deimantas. Let's exercise a bit!

Rasa. What?!

Deimantas. Well, let's go out and exercise a bit! Like people do – chop, chop!

Rasa. I don't want to.

Deimantas. Come on, let's exercise!

Rasa. Go on your own, I don't want to.

Deimantas. It's boring on my own.

Rasa. So don't go!

Deimantas. But you really need some exercise.

Rasa. Did you really just say that?

Deimantas. What? Your belly wobbles all over, you need to keep fit.

Rasa. I'm reading a book – can't you see it? *(Reads the book, feeling insulted.)*

Deimantas. You're weak.

Rasa. I'm not weak, I just don't want to.

Deimantas. Prove it!

Rasa. What?

Deimantas. Well, prove that you can!

Rasa. I don't want to...

Deimantas. Well, prove it!

Rasa. Aargh! *(Rasa puts the book away.)*

They compete in some exercises of strength – doing push-ups or sit-ups. Rasa tries to keep up, but... Let's be honest – she can't. Deimantas does everything with perfect precision and correctly and quickly.

Deimantas. OK, OK, OK! Do this every day and you can do even more than that by the end of the summer!

Rasa. *(Wobbly on her feet, angry, she's struggling, quietly.)* Fuck off. *(Goes away.)*

Deimantas. Yo! Come back!

Rasa. Summer holidays were summer holidays. They weren't always interesting, but I looked forward to them every year, because it was simply our time. Every year, we became closer whilst growing apart at the same time, because we were just so different.

Both scrub themselves up.

Rasa. I wore wide-legged trousers, short and tight t-shirts, old and shabby high-tops on my feet and I let my socks fall to my ankles so they would look baggy. I had leather straps and necklaces around my neck and my hair was spiky, like a crow's nest. Deimantas, on the other hand, wore short tracksuit bottoms and net shirts, sterile white sneakers and pulled his socks as high up as possible. He had a thick silver chain around his neck and hid his crew cut under a cap with a rolled bill. A rolled bill!

They stare at each other sneakily, unable to believe what the other is wearing

Deimantas. *(On what Rasa looks like.)* What are you wearing?!

Rasa. *(On what Deimantas looks like.)* What are you wearing yourself?!

Deimantas. What? At least I've dressed myself appropriately for going to town. *(Carefully sprays perfume on himself.)*

Rasa. *(Sprays perfume exactly 2 times, about Deimantas.)* Oh yeah...

Deimantas. You look like folkie.

Rasa. Like what?

Deimantas. Well, we call people like you folkies where I live.

Rasa. And what are people like you called? Chavs?

Deimantas. *(Feels insulted.)* No, big guys.

Rasa. Well... you don't argue over taste. *(To herself.)* You laugh about it.

Deimantas. What?!

Rasa. You're in Latvia!

Deimantas. And?

Rasa. People... don't dress like that here.

Deimantas. I don't care, I don't walk around town dressed like a homeless person.

Rasa. How am I supposed to understand that?

Deimantas shrugs, looks in the mirror, arranges something in his 'image', Rasa looks at him.

Rasa. *(To the audience.)* That time, on Fishermen's Day in Liepājā, we walked on different sides of the road, because each of us felt embarrassed about their cousin.

When we were seventeen, he visited me in Salaspils. He had a cane and he was limping, I didn't know why, but I knew I could only ask him when there was no one else around – no adults.

Deimantas. Let's go clubbing somewhere?

Rasa. What?!

Deimantas. Let's go clubbing somewhere? To Riga.

Rasa. We're not 18 yet – they won't let us in anywhere.

Deimantas. They will.

Rasa. You have fake ID?

Deimantas. I don't need it, they let me in everywhere anyway.

Rasa. Oh, OK...

Deimantas. Where do you usually go?

Rasa. I... I usually go to a sauna or a nearby bar with my friends, or... well, to some underground rave.

Deimantas. But clubbing? What's the best club here?

Rasa. Club! You really want to go clubbing?

Deimantas. Yeah!

Rasa. But you're limping!

Deimantas. So?

Rasa. *(To the audience.)* After arguing for some time and me not wanting to admit to him that I don't go to the kind of clubs he would like, I still somehow got dressed up and agreed to go to Club Essential with him. Just to give you an idea of what Essential was like – it was the club that everyone went to, except those who were in favour of any alternative whatsoever. I did not belong to the target group of this club. Deimantas did. Essential was the kind of club where girls danced like this all the time. *(Shows, mocking them.)* And the guys did this...

Deimantas shows how you were supposed to dance in Essential (he's not mocking, he's enjoying it.)

Rasa. You had to look chic when you went to Essential – hair parted in a zigzag pattern, straight strands of hair hanging over the cheeks, belly preferably bared and, above all, totally convinced that you were supposed to be right here. *(Sighs, because she doesn't feel convinced.)*

We jumped on the last train to Riga and went to the club. I had a badly faked student ID in my bag, and I was totally convinced that I don't want to go to Essential. I don't want to! We got off the train, made our way through the busy station, went through Vērmāne Park, and..

(To Deimantas.) I can't.

Deimantas. What do you mean?

Rasa. I can't go in there! I'm scared, I've never been there.

Deimantas. Never?

Rasa. No!

Deimantas. Well, this'll be the first time then.

Rasa. But I don't want to! I don't want, don't want, don't want, don't want to. I don't want to!

Deimantas. Rasa...

Rasa. I don't want to!

Deimantas. Rasa.

Rasa. It's obvious they won't even let us in.

Deimantas. They will!

Rasa. No, they won't!

Deimantas. Yes.

Rasa. No!

Deimantas. What are you afraid of?

Rasa. I don't know. I just don't want to go in there.

Pause. Rasa sort of intends to enter the club, but...

Rasa. *(Quietly.)* I don't want to... I can't! I can't, I don't want to.

Deimantas. *(Pause.)* So what do we do now?

Rasa. I'm sorry.

Deimantas. Well, what the hell – I can't drag you in there by force, that much is clear to me...

Rasa. *(Looks at her watch.)* The train is in six hours...

Deimantas. Super.

Rasa. Let's go see a movie?

Deimantas shrugs.

Rasa. *(To the audience.)* We went to the cinema – I really can't remember which movie we watched, and afterwards we sat in Čili's Pizza until 5:40. Just the two of us. That time, we really did stay up all night. We ate pizza, drank cola and chatted.

(*To Deimantas.*) Why are you limping?

Deimantas. Ah...

Rasa. Tell me!

Deimantas. It just happened..

Rasa. Just tell me.

Deimantas. (*Pause.*) I go to MMA training.

Rasa. What's that?

Deimantas. (*To the audience.*) Mixed martial arts. It is a full-contact sport, a way of fighting without rules.

Rasa. So you're just fighting?

Deimantas. No! The sport combines several styles of combat sports: boxing, judo, jujitsu, wrestling and others. There are some rules. You're not allowed kick below the waist and the spine. If it's an official fight...

Rasa. Why?

Deimantas. (*Shrugs.*) I wanted to try! I can combine all the skills I've acquired...

Rasa. And fuck up your leg.

Deimantas. It'll be fine.

Rasa. And your parents? They're OK with this?

Deimantas. Why do you think they know?

Rasa. Well, fuck me...

Deimantas. Don't swear, it's not for girls.

Rasa. What do they think happened to your leg?

Deimantas. Sports!

Rasa. Sports... And you like it?

Deimantas. Sports?

Rasa. No, that combat thing.

Deimantas. Ah.

Rasa. Why?

Deimantas. (*Shrugs.*) I have friends there.

Rasa. If your parents find out, you're *screwed*.

Deimantas. Why do you think they'll find out? They don't have time for things like that. They can't even cope with themselves.

Rasa. Hm... Still at each other's throats?

Deimantas. Yep. No, really, it is what it is – I'm never going to have a Scorpio as a girl-friend.

Rasa. (*Grimaces.*) My boyfriend is a Scorpio.

Deimantas. No.

Rasa. Yep.

Deimantas. Well, my condolences. Look at what they're like, my parents, Deividas and your mum, I don't want to see any other Scorpions.

Rasa. But he's different...

Deimantas. Yes, yes, of course he's different. Just don't let him get you up the duff.

Rasa. (*To the audience.*) Deimantas's parents – Raimonds and Aušra – were born in the same year, on the same day, a couple of hours apart. They met when they were 18 and had Deimantas soon after. That's why they got married without really knowing much about each other. They both dreamt about becoming musicians. One played the clarinet, the other the flute. But things took a different turn, they had a family and needed to earn a living, so didn't have the time for higher education. When we were 17, they were 35 – they were still young, their children weren't children anymore and they finally wanted to get their own lives on track. Makes sense...

(*To Deimantas.*) Don't be stupid! Up the duff?!

Deimantas. Just joking...

Rasa. You really don't tell Raimis and Aušra anything?

Deimantas. Do you?

Rasa. Well... if my mum asks, then maybe I tell her.

Deimantas. So you also filter what you say, don't tell me you don't do that. Every normal person filters what to tell their parents and what not!

Rasa. Well, maybe.

Deimantas. And you have a different relationship with your mum anyway – it's just the two you, but there's four of us. Mum and dad are working on their problems, all they ask me is how I'm doing at school.

Rasa. As if you told them anything if they asked...

Deimantas. I don't know why they've got it into their heads that good marks actually mean and guarantee anything. That's stupid. I'm smart, I know that, I don't need a bunch of old loofahs confirming that to me by giving me marks at school.

Rasa. Old loofahs?

Deimantas. You know what I mean.

Rasa. And Deivis?

Deimantas. What about him?

Rasa. Does he also go to this MMA?

Deimantas. No, he's still too small, he can't... *(Pause.)* But in general... Oh well.

Rasa. What?

Deimantas. No, nothing.

Rasa. Say what you wanted to say!

Deimantas. *(Pauses a bit longer.)* Me and the guys I just do our own thing.

Rasa. What do you mean?

Deimantas. Well, we have all kinds of business to attend to in Vilnius...

Rasa. What business?

Deimantas. Oh, there... *(Mimics racing in a car, shooting.)*

Rasa watches Deimantas's 'act' and takes it as a joke.

Rasa. *(Not understanding anything.)* Let's suppose I understood what you do there.

Deimantas. And there is no need to understand.

Rasa. But when?

Deimantas. When necessary...

Rasa. And you're really allowed to go?

Deimantas. I just do, I don't ask anything.

Rasa. Hm... My mum whinges for a week before she allows me to go anywhere. And as soon as any of my marks drops below the standard, that's it, you're not going anywhere, you're not doing anything...

Deimantas. And so it should be – there's no need for girls hang around at places.

Rasa. *(Casts a surprised look at Deimantas.)* Hey! I thought you were on my side.

Deimantas smiles and shrugs.

Rasa. I already know that you're on my side.

Deimantas. Anyway, tell me about that bloke of yours, so I know what I'm up against when something goes tits up. Who else would protect you...

Rasa. *(To the audience.)* The first time it occurred to me that there was something more behind Deimantas' broken leg and MMA was on his eighteenth birthday. Eighteenth! Birthday.

Deimantas. Oh, it was a great party!

Rasa. Yeah, well, in my mind, "a great party" meant the total opposite of everything that happened on his eighteenth birthday.

My 18th birthday party was in a sauna. Everyone was there at first – friends and relatives, my mum and family then drove off and the rest of us carried on partying. Well, a normal party! Dancing, singing, alcohol, tortures of love and stupid jokes until the early hours. My friends gave me a big cardboard box filled with totally random things – gherkins, tomato juice, condensed milk, socks...

Deimantas' birthday party, however, took place in a villa and wasn't attended by anyone from our family except me and his brother – my little cousin Deividas. Parents, grandparents and other family stayed at home. In a three-room apartment in an old soviet concrete-panelled house. To eat potato salad and cake.

I was instructed to wear an evening gown. *(To Deimantas.)* For real?

Deimantas. What?

Rasa. At the age of 18, my brain and my world didn't contain a file named "evening gown".

I remember I wore my pink year 9 graduation skirt and a black Bardot top. Pointy black shoes and excessive confusion.

Deimantas was not at home, but when the agreed time arrived, I and Deividas – my little cousin – were picked up by a black Beemer with tinted windows that had screens mounted on the seats. Screens. This was 14 years ago! 2006.aastal! And we'd just turned 18... Don't you think it's a bit odd?

Deimantas. *(Shrugs.)* No.

Pause, Rasa looks at Deimantas with some anger. They she turns to audience again.

Rasa. This party was in a villa. A villa! A striking white house on a hill, lamps and lights everywhere, loud music, Deimantas greets all his guests at the entrance and shakes hands with everyone...?! His girlfriend is standing next to him, everything is being filmed, I am led into the party rooms, which are huge. The guests are really in evening dress. Guys in suits and tuxedos, chicks in totally abnormal floor-length dresses, their hair intricately done up. I obviously spent the entire night sitting at a table covered in wine glasses... What's going on?!

Loud music is playing. Deimantas is partying.

Rasa. For his 18th birthday, he was given giant watches, cigars, expensive bottles of alcohol and things that, in my deeply personal opinion, were only associated with well-off people in their fifties. What's going on?!

Loud music is playing. Deimantas is partying.

Rasa. All the ladies who'd come to the party were sitting at the table in groups, whilst Deimantas' friends had thrown off their jackets and sang along to the songs in a friendly chain, dancing in the same friendly line of guys. What the heck is going on?!

Loud music is playing. Deimantas is partying. He then comes to Rasa and, beaming like the sun, looks for something in the inner pocket of his jacket.

Deimantas. Rasa?

Rasa. *(Drinks wine.)* Yeah?

Deimantas. How are you?

Rasa. I... don't even know.

Deimantas. Great party, isn't it?

Rasa. Yes, well... Yes, yes. *(Pointing at the others.)* These are all your friends?

Deimantas. Yes.

Rasa. From where?!

Deimantas. Sports, business...

Rasa. Oh... This sporty business "without rules"?

Deimantas. Yes, yes, yes indeed. *(Pulls a thin black leather glove from the inside pocket of his jacket and puts it on his right hand.)* Listen, you have to go home now, the taxi is waiting.

Rasa. What?

Deimantas. Deividas will go with you. We're having an issue, I have to sort out a couple of things, but don't worry. I'll see you tomorrow...

Rasa. But...

Deimantas. Come, I'll walk you out...

Rasa. But...

Deimantas. *(Suddenly becomes strict.)* Come on!

Rasa gulps down her wine and Deimantas walks her out of the house.

Rasa. I was in the taxi with my little cousin and maybe I should've really inquired and asked what was going on, but... he was fifteen! And he was so fascinated by it all *(Pause, as if Deividas was saying it.)* Bloody hell, how cool, bloody hell...! Did you see that? A guy over there stabbed someone in the ribs with a fork! Fuck me! Such action and - bloody hell... Bloody hell...! *(To Deimantas, reproachfully.)* For real? A fork in the ribs?

Deimantas. We sorted everything out and it's not my fault the kid found it cool.

Rasa. And at the same time, all of our family sat at the table, eating potato salad and doing everything they could to not see or notice anything. *(As if someone would ask him how the party was.)* Well, how did you do? ... Were there many people? Was there enough food for everyone? There were no problems?

It's great that we sang at least, even though Deimantas wasn't there... At least that. Happy birthday to him, and again, happy birthday to him! And for the third time, happy birthday to him!

I also sat there with my salad, bloody forks in front of me...

Deimantas. *(gives a toast, meaning "Rasa, don't worry about things that have nothing to do with you")* Let's drink champagne before it goes flat! We have to enjoy life whilst we're still alive!

Rasa. When I typed "Kaunas mafia" into image search in Google, the second photo the algorithm showed ME was one of my cousin.

Deimantas. Mafia? *(Laughs.)* Oh, come on. That's a bit harsh. It's the jargon of reporters, the law enforcement, it's what they say. I wouldn't call it mafia – we're not the Sopranos or anything! It's just business. Just some business!

Rasa. I didn't realise it back then, but now I know that around this time – in the early 2000s – the Kaunas mafia...

Deimantas. *(About the use of the word "mafia".)* Well...

Rasa. *(Speaks faster and faster, as if she understands what she's talking about, but everything she says is just empty words on the topic)...* the big guys who'd been running it for a long time, the big gangs were being taken over by newcomers – young boys. All of the "old" groups had ceased to exist, because their leaders were doing the time in prison – mostly life sentences, or their lives had been taken by force. Now,

14 years later, I know that the mafia network is different at present, because the participants have started migrating internationally, from one group to another! In criminology, they call it “mobile banditry” and some online sources suggest that it’s closely linked to the Schengen Treaty. The local guys travel to the “rich” European countries to commit their crimes there and then come back home. At the same time, they have allies everywhere..

Deimantas. (*Ironically.*) Well, you know – all the doors are open... (*Laughs.*)

Rasa. Exactly! You don’t even need to speak different languages, you just have to be eager to make a lot of money, that is the common denominator. And another interesting thing – the activity principles of the groups have changed, they work in small parties, not like in Hollywood movies – as an organised mass. Everything happens at the level of alliance.

Deimantas. How do you know it?

Rasa. (*Pause.*) I...

Deimantas. How can you know how everything works after reading a couple of articles online? It’s like diagnosing yourself based on what you read online!

Rasa. (*Pause. Ignores Deimantas, continues speaking.*) Dutch criminologist Dina Siegel claims that by now, the Lithuanian mafia has exceeded the achievements of the Russian and Albanian mafia...

Deimantas. (*To change the subject.*) Yes, yes, let’s go clubbing?

Rasa. What is it with you and these clubs?

Deimantas. I have some things to do, tag along.

Rasa. (*To the audience.*) This club was fifteen times more impressive and terrible than Essential. When we got there, the line to get in was endless, we just walked past it, Deimantas shook hands with the bouncer and the doors of the club opened to us – no ID, no questions... (*Music starts playing, that’s why Rasa is shouting.*) **Deimantas.** What do you want to drink?

Rasa. I... I don’t know.

Deimantas. Champagne? Is that OK?

Rasa. Ah.

Deimantas. I have a few things to sort out, but my friend Algis will keep an eye on you...

Rasa. OK... We went to the second floor – the room was lined with tables surrounded by sofas, most occupied by muscle mountains and their dainty bimbos. The girls mostly drank champagne, the guys sipped all kinds of brown stuff from glasses that looked like crystal. Pulsating lights, terrible noise. Deimantas shook hands with countless

people, and I never saw him drink anything. There was a dance floor in the middle of the room, a cage in each corner. After certain intervals, half-naked girls slipped into the cages, accompanied by particularly loud noise and blinding lights. They danced, I watched. Mutely.

Rasa. Algis! I'm Rasa.

They stand facing each other for a moment, Rasa drinks champagne, looks at what's going on around her, is feeling a little provocative – what, for heaven's sake, are you doing here?

Rasa. Shall we dance? You don't dance?

Rasa dances, Algis stands next to her and fidgets to the rhythm of the music.

Rasa. How do you know Deimantas?

Algis doesn't say anything.

Rasa. Are you always this mysterious? *Algis doesn't say anything.* Where are the toilets?

Algis doesn't say anything.

Rasa. Are you coming with me or?

Algis doesn't say anything. When Rasa comes out of the toilet, Deimantas is waiting for her.

Deimantas. Ready?

Rasa. Done?

Deimantas. Yep, I did what needed to be done.

Rasa. Where's Algis?

Deimantas. *(Points in a specific direction.)* There.

Rasa. Who is he really?

Deimantas. Algis... *(Laughs.)*

Rasa. *(To the audience.)* Every time, he managed to show me there were things I would never know anything about. That evening, we drove to his place and stayed overnight – we slept on small fold-out sofa beds.

Both seem to be sleeping.

Rasa. *(To Deimantas.)* You're not sleeping?

Deimantas. No.

Rasa. Where are you when you're not here?

Deimantas. Why do you think I'm not here?

Rasa. I can't see your presence here... Deividas may be here, but you're not.

Deimantas. I mainly stay with my girlfriend. Sometimes at red granny's flat.

Rasa. Hm... Why?

Deimantas. Well, why stay here... Dad, mum and the kid are here...

Rasa. Hm...

Deimantas. It would be easier to find my own place. Sometimes I think I'll soon get my own place. Get a flat.

Rasa. Get a flat? They're just lying around here or?!

Deimantas. Well, no, but maybe I'll arrange something with red granny, maybe with my friends... I'd like to find my own place.

Rasa. Hm... So would I. But it's not realistic for now. We have to finish school first.

Deimantas. Right... Right.

Rasa. What will you do after secondary school?

Deimantas doesn't answer the question.

Deimantas. *(He gets up and goes to the table.)* I have something for you... *(He takes a gold ring with a stone from the drawer, gives it to Rasa, climbs back in bed.)* Here...

Rasa. What's that? *(Tries to understand in the dark what's been given to her.)*

Deimantas. Nothing special...

Rasa. A ring?!

Deimantas. Ah...

Rasa. Have you lost your mind? It probably costs a fortune...

Deimantas. Don't worry about that.

Rasa. *(To the audience.)* I was eighteen. And this ring *(Shows)* is the only thing I've left of Deimantas. *(Says nothing for a while, then pulls herself together and asks Deimantas:)*

Rasa. Wow... I... don't even know what to say! Thank you...

Deimantas. Don't mention it...

Rasa. Listen... what do you actually do?

Deimantas. (*Smiles.*) Tell me about yourself instead – where will you go to study after secondary school?

Rasa. But...

Deimantas. Seriously.

Rasa. But...!

Deimantas. Tell me!

Rasa. Well... I will apply everywhere I can, as it seems to me that's what I have to do. Mum wants me to study languages, because I could be good at it, but I want dramaturgy.

Deimantas. Like literature or?

Rasa. Well... I don't know, from the description it seems more like writing something for theatre, cinema or television.

Deimantas. Sounds good.

Rasa. But maybe I can't get in...

Deimantas. You can, you can. And if not, call me, we'll figure something out...

Rasa. (*Pause.*) What do you mean?

Deimantas. You'll go to Lithuania to study – I can get you in anywhere you want to...

Rasa. (*Still puzzled.*) Hm... Well... We'll see... You're not thinking of going to uni?

Deimantas. I don't have time for it.

Rasa. You don't have time? So what do you do that you don't have time?

Deimantas. Rasa...

Rasa. What? A normal question! You told me yourself you could get me into any school, so...

Deimantas. Ra-sa...

Rasa. (*To the audience.*) It's the same every time – as soon as I start asking what he's actually doing, I find myself talking about what I'm doing. Maybe it brought us closer together more than everything else – he just listened! And he believed I would succeed at everything I wanted to do...

As soon as I graduated from secondary school and started studying dramaturgy, I also started translating from Lithuanian into Latvian, and I had to translate two kinds of documents. Medical papers, but also criminal matters. Usually about Lithuanians, who'd gone to Latvia and stirred up some shit, let's put it like that...

I studied dramaturgy during the day and translated mostly criminal matters in the evening. All in all, it was an epic combo for fantasising, because... How can I explain

it better? I know that Deimantas was doing something – something! But I didn't know what exactly... Maybe he...

Deimantas. Maybe I guzzled that moonshine they make near the border and then went to the neighbours across the border to steal their chainsaws and then say in my testimony that it wasn't me.

Rasa. No, it really wasn't you.

Deimantas. Maybe I drive stolen cars regularly from Lithuania to Latvia, left them here to be dismantled for spare parts, and then get a lift back to Lithuania.

Rasa. Er... yes, maybe, but... no, that couldn't have been you either.

Deimantas. Maybe I was picked from the street to join a criminal organisation, where I suddenly found the family I'd been missing all my life, and the "old guys" looked after me with so much kindness that I was prepared to do anything for them. And then I was told once that there was a task for me – I was told to get in a taxi and taken from Lithuania to the centre of Riga, not far from the central market, where I was given another coat and an automatic weapon and told I had to kill someone. Just like that – and straightaway. A Latvian colleague picked me up on his motorbike, took me to the Daugava sports hall and told me where I had to go and what I had to do, and I went. Because I was in a foreign country, alone, without roots. I went. I did it. When I came out of the sports hall, nobody was waiting for me there. But I'd just shot someone!!! For hours, I wandered in the streets of Riga in a state of total shock. Then my friends picked me up – it turned out they'd been following me all along. They picked me up, took me to the Latvian criminal authorities, "my guys" were also sitting there. They told me to go to the kitchen and slice up some sausage for snacking, then gave me 100 grams of pure white vodka three times and told me to forget what just happened. On the way back to Lithuania, we buried the gun at the border...

Rasa. No, it happened in the nineties. It was a young guy from an orphanage... And I learned about this case, because it was solved 10 years later. But it already felt, there seemed to be something close to you in this case, although... Deimantas did have a family! I was his family! We all were! Maybe there were too few of us... I don't know... And the nicknames of these criminal authorities – Gena, Karabashka, Kalabok, Kissa, Mandarin – the cream of the cartoons, you see! Of course teenagers found this stuff attractive. I don't know what Deimantas' nickname would be if he was a criminal authority...

Deimantas. Deima.

Rasa. (*Laughs.*) Deima. Extremely original. Everyone called him that. And in Lithuanian, the full name of Deimantas means “diamond”. It clearly sets a bar to aim for... (*To Deimantas.*) Right?

Deimantas. (*Shrugs.*) It’s a normal nickname.

Rasa. In every sense, the history of the Lithuanian – particularly Kaunas – mafia is long and even though I looked for all information available on it for literary purposes, I couldn’t find anything more than it was “interesting”. Yes, I understand that business, politics and crime have always formed a strange trinity. Their structures cannot really exist without each other. The line between business and crime is a thin one, and very much influenced by the decisions of political forces. During the “perestroika”, racketeering was the way to target the activities of many of the first businessmen, massively exploiting privatisation opportunities, amassing and legalising money obtained by criminal means. This was the beginning of many Lithuanian mafias like the Tulips, the Vilnius Brigade, The Doctors, The Princes... (*with emphasis*) The Cucumbers (*looks at Deimantas, puzzled.*)

Deimantas. (*Sensing the question that had never been asked out loud – which mafia group did you belong to?*) Oh, leave it... Does it really matter?

Rasa. And it was probably the same in Latvia and Estonia. At least, that’s what I assume. OK, I don’t know about Estonia, but speaking of the situation in Latvia, criminal authorities are not regarded as superstars in our society today, in 2020, and the mafia of the 90s has turned into a legal network of debt collection companies, but in Lithuania, they write bestsellers about the “adventures” of various criminal organisation that sell millions of copies!

Deimantas. It’s called tradition.

Rasa. (*Sceptically.*) Yeah... The odyssey of the criminal cucumber. Never mind – the more criminal cases I read, the more regularly I checked the phone numbers written in all the files, scared that one of them could be Deimantas’ number. How did I feel in this situation? I don’t know. He was still my cousin. The only change was the development of professional cretinism started in me. In dramaturgy, I began to understand the causal links that were not and could not be coincidental. Everything happens for a reason. A specific person makes a specific choice in a specific situation that has specific consequences. But we weren’t so different at all...

(*To Deimantas.*) OK, you were constantly forced to study AND do sports!

Deimantas. Well, you were forced to play the piano – what was the point of that? When was the last time you played the piano?

Rasa. Yes, but you allowed all this to take you over to some extent!

Deimantas. What are you on about?

Rasa. Well... Imagine you're my mother.

Deimantas. (*Takes on the role.*) OK.

Rasa. May I?

Deimantas. Yes.

Rasa. Mum, I decided to study dramaturgy.

Deimantas. What?!

Rasa. Dramaturgy! I want to become a dramatist.

Deimantas. (*Exaggerates.*) Oh no! Oh no! But what about languages, the piano, all the things you're good at, why do you have to pick something you're not going to succeed in? Have I really done everything in vain? Oh no! You should've played the piano, got yourself a normal job, teach kids, become the director of a music school like me, but no, all you're interested in are bohemianism and chaos. You're just like your father... It's such an unstable job, oh no!

Rasa. I'm good at writing. (*Pause*) Let's swap roles, I'll be your parents now.

Deimantas. OK...

Rasa. (*Like mother.*) What mark is that?

Deimantas. Get over it, it's just a number.

Rasa. What mark is that? You want to be like your dad – just run around and do parachute jumps, risk your life, can you imagine – the ALFA unit, but what good is it to me if you can't earn decent money for it? You have to work with your head! What will you live on if you don't have a decent job? How will you support your family?

Deimantas. OK...

Rasa. (*Like father.*) Hey, shall we go for a run?

Deimantas. I can't.

Rasa. Why?

Deimantas. I have to study.

Rasa. You're like your *Mutter*, you only get worked up about things, but don't actually want to do anything. Growing a spare tyre or something?

Rasa. OK, let's go for a run. Get some fresh air!

Deimantas. I don't want to, I run faster than you anyway.

Rasa. Only strength, only strength and the body, and now you don't know how to prove yourself, where to place yourself, what to do with yourself – he has the strength.

Rasa. Yes, that's true...

Deimantas. Yes, that's true!

Rasa. Yes, that's true...

Deimantas. Yes, that's true...

Rasa. Yes, that's true...

Deimantas. (*Angrily.*) Yes, that's true!

Rasa. The main thing is to establish yourself, to have chicks chasing you, nothing else, sticking your head up your own arse, completely pointless. Are you listening? You have to study! You have to make a living!

You won't find happiness with money and good marks. You have to educate yourself, break through!

Deimantas. (*Stops the game.*) Whatever, I can't be bothered...

Rasa. Yep. The fundamentals of dramaturgy, why we do what we do. We differ in age, income, values and dreams. There's not enough of this, that's too small... *Pause*

Rasa. At the age of 21, when I'd finished my second year at the academy, Deimantas spent several months in Liepāja. Nobody really knew why he didn't go home, what happened, why it happened... because he didn't tell anyone anything! And how do you ask someone something like that...

(*As if she wants to ask Deimantas something.*) Deima, listen...?

Deimantas. Yeah?

Rasa. (*After a pause.*) No, nothing...

(*To the audience*) In the summer, I was there, of course. I travelled from Riga to Liepāja by coach. And at the bus station, Deimantas was waiting for me in a black seven-series Beemer with tinted windows that sounded like a whole music festival.

Deimantas. Hi!

Rasa. Hiiiiii! How I've missed you! Ah! It's great that you came here.

Deimantas. Well, yes...

Rasa. Is this your car?!

Deimantas. We're off?

Rasa. I don't suppose there's any point in me asking where you got it from...

Deimantas. We're off!

Rasa. (*Talks loudly as the music plays louder.*) Damn...

They both get in the car, Deimantas rolls down the windows.

Rasa. Why are you rolling down the windows?

Deimantas. You're not allowed to drive with tinted front windows in Latvia, I've already paid a fortune to the local cops – I'm done treating them!

Deimantas turns up the volume, making the music really loud. They drive in the car together, the wind is blowing, Rasa's hair is flying in the air.

Deimantas. Listen! The grandparents are off to a cemetery holiday at the weekend, Deividas is coming over with a couple of my friends, maybe you can invite some of your girlfriends over?

Rasa. What?!

Deimantas. It's summer after all! We have to celebrate!

Rasa. And you're really saying that?

Deimantas. What? We're not kids anymore, we can do anything we want! Besides... there's no one home. *(Laughs.)*

Rasa. *(Laughs.)* Haha – we're not kids anymore.

Deimantas. We've been pretty obedient the whole time anyway, very obedient, incredibly obedient. The worst we've done – we hid kittens in the shed, broke the window in the yard door once...

Rasa. You did.

Deimantas. OK, I broke it, but you didn't let me into the house!

Rasa. *(Laughs, to herself.)* Idiots.

Deimantas. What other horrible things did we do? We accidentally threw a ceramic hedgehog at Deividas' head...

Rasa. Hu, that was sick. I was actually afraid. Just like that other time when he passed out, when we did that trick where you have to squat, breathe in, then stand up, squeeze your mouth and nose shut, and then blow out air until you go all dizzy and then you behave like you were drunk.

Deimantas. Whoa! Finally, we're getting drunk for real and then we see how well this code has really survived.

Rasa. Crazy funny.

Deimantas. Chop, chop, chop! We'll celebrate this summer! *(Turns the music up.)*

Rasa. *(To the audience.)* When you're 21, you don't have to look far to find reasons to celebrate! Right?

It was only later, many years later, that I learned Deimantas had been hiding from the court in Liepāja that summer, where he was due to trial for repeated racketeering, he'd tried to "beat out" the necessary amounts from several "debtors" by one means or another. It all started in 2006 with the threat to take away some man's phone and continued with the attempts to collect a debt from another man by taking away his car and, of course, threatening, threatening, threatening, threatening... Beating, beating, beating, robbing, calling and threatening again... He wasn't alone in all this! He was with a friend. He used the car borrowed from his friend's grandma to drive himself to the "jobs"... *(Looks suspiciously at Deimantas. Pause.)*

Deimantas. *(Turns the music down, to Rasa.)* Well, will you text your girlfriends?

Rasa. Yes, OK...

Rasa takes her phone, but Deimantas gets a message. As he's driving, he passes his phone to Rasa.

Deimantas. What does it say?

Rasa. *(Takes the phone, reads.)* Sweetie, I'm going to be late for grandma's birthday. You'll buy the cake, right?

Deimantas. *(Looking at the phone.)* Weeeeell!

Rasa. What?

Deimantas. They'll be at the city limits in half an hour! Well, text your girlfriends! Text!

Rasa. When translating criminal cases, I occasionally had to translate extracts from text messages. The correspondence never matched the actual content of the messages! Something like "Sweetie, I'm going to be late for grandma's birthday" could've meant a meeting at city limits in half an hour. Or "You'll buy the cake, right?" could've been a request to bring cash...

Deimantas. And then? Beach Party in the evening?

Rasa. We don't have tickets...

Deimantas. So? Let's buy them!

Rasa. When we reached the city limits, a Beemer was waiting for us, and five guys looking exactly like Deimantas rolled out. One of them was my little cousin – Deividas. Algis was there too. He smiled and greeted me from afar. You'd be amazed at how warmly these mountains of muscle could hug...

In the evening, I and Deimantas went to pick up two of my girlfriends and then all of us went to the Beach Party. Deimantas paid for everything.

Music is playing, Rasa tries to “hit on” Algis, but fails.

Rasa. The Beach Party ended, the friends drove away, the cemetery holiday ended, the grandparents came back.

Night.

Rasa. *(To Deimantas.)* Are you sleeping?

Deimantas. No.

Rasa. I can't sleep either.

Deimantas. What are you thinking about?

Rasa. Nothing like that... Just that it was cool! It's cool that they all came here.

Deimantas. Yes, isn't it? They'll come again soon if they can make it...

Rasa. It's still stupid that Algis spurned my advances.

Deimantas. Rasa...

Rasa. What? I'm single, I can do whatever I want.

Deimantas. Well, not with my friends.

Rasa. What's that supposed to me? You can try it on with my girlfriends, but I can't do the same with your friends?

Deimantas. There are rules you just have to follow. That's it.

Rasa. You couldn't have told me this before? And I was trying, like some... *(Hides her head in the pillows in embarrassment. Pause.)* What are you planning to do?

Deimantas. What do you mean?

Rasa. Well... You can't go back home, can you?

Deimantas. Home... I couldn't even go to grandpa's funeral, so how could I go home? All these dickheads – hunting me, waiting for me to make a mistake, fucking sluts...

Rasa. *(To the audience.)* At that point, I could've asked him to tell me more! Maybe he would've even answered, but I didn't ask, because... He was my Deimantas the way I knew him and I didn't want to know any different.

Silence. Some movement can be heard in Deimantas' room.

Rasa. What are you doing there?

Deimantas. I'm doing sit-ups...

Rasa. Right now?

Deimantas. I can't fall asleep anyway, I have to do something to tire myself out... It's not the first night like this.

Rasa. You're doing sit-ups every night?

Deimantas. Why sit-ups, I do all kinds of things.

Rasa. You don't sleep at all?

Deimantas. Sometimes I nod off.

Rasa. *(Pause.)* Maybe you need some sleeping pills?

Deimantas. No, no, no.

Rasa. Why not?

Deimantas. What if I need to get up quickly, but cannot do it because of the sleeping pills?

Rasa. *(Pause.)* What are you so anxious about?

Deimantas. *(Laughs, then sighs.)* There are things you don't need to know...

Rasa. Anxious people don't rest.

Deimantas. What?

Rasa. No, nothing, I remembered a line from a play we had to read at the academy.

Deimantas. The academy... You like studying?

Rasa. I do.

Deimantas. Maybe it really can be cool.

Rasa. You have every opportunity!

Deimantas. *(Laughs.)* Yes, of course...

Rasa. *(Pause.)* What would you like to study?

Deimantas. *(Snorts.)* What kind of question is this...

Rasa. A normal question!

Deimantas. I don't know. Business management. Or maybe psychology. I like psychology too. Or at least I could like it...

Rasa. You wanted to be an athlete when you were a kid!

Deimantas. *(Gives a short laugh.)* Oh, the things I wanted as a child...

Rasa. You also wanted to build a hundred-storey house!

Deimantas. Yes, for all of us...

Pause

Rasa. You... You're going to be OK?

Deimantas. Yes. Of course! I just have to... *(Laughs.)* Live in a place like this for some time... Well, after I've sorted out a couple of things. And then I have to be there for some time... If I don't get away...

Rasa. And that was it. That summer, we painted the house, went to the seaside, ate ice cream, grilled meat. When I had to go back to Riga, he drove me home.

They go to the car together and Deimantas checks the vehicle for "bugs".

Rasa. What are you doing?

Deimantas. Checking that we have no unwanted company...

Rasa. Again?

Deimantas. You can never have too much security, right?

Rasa looks around, but can't see anyone.

Rasa. Aren't you overdoing it a bit?

Deimantas doesn't answer and checks the whole car.

Deimantas. We're off!

They get in the car, Deimantas turns the music on, the wind is blowing.

Rasa. I don't know why, but I remember that on the way out of Liepāja, a family of swans walked along the road towards Riga. We were silent all the way, said goodbye in Salaspils, he drove to the New Wave... That New Wave that was frequented by the A-listers of the Russian show business in Jūrmala... *(Gestures that her head will explode).*

When an international search warrant was put out for Deimantas, he drove himself to Kaunas and had himself put in jail. That's it – he had himself put in jail. Just had himself put in jail. He was sentenced to a total of six years in prison in several courts... I had to tell our grandparents! They were not particularly surprised...

Deimantas. When did you start thinking that something like... this could follow?

Rasa. It must've at the point when you were in prison and I had no idea yet that this was just the first half of the story. *(Laughs.)* Anyway, I just went to my film class without having done my homework. And we had to pitch ideas for film scripts to him. I told him about you! Instead of the homework I hadn't done. My cheeks were flushed and sweat was running down my back, but everyone liked it. There's something in this story! And I knew there was something in this story, but I couldn't figure out the what the most important thing was – that you were my cousin, or that your story would be an epic movie script! It was 10 years ago... Anyway, instead of writing a script about you, I wrote the script for this... *(Shows the trailer of Swingers. Shrugs.)*

Deimantas. Yes, well... We need films like this too.

Rasa. *(Hits him in the shoulder.)* Stop joking!

Deimantas. I'm not joking. I am calming you down *(Laughs.)*

Rasa. Deimantas spent six years in prison. Six years. In those years, we exchanged sixteen e-mails with seventy-six photos. That's 2.6666666666666666(...) e-mails per year. We called as well. 2010.

Rasa's phone rings. She answers it.

Rasa. Hello!

Deimantas. Rasa? Hi! Can you hear me?

Rasa. Yes, very well!

Deimantas. What are you doing?

Rasa. Errrr, well... Sitting at my desk trying to write something... Nothing crazy new has happened! How are you?

Deimantas. Hunky-dory! I have so much work... We're renovating a bit here! I'll send you some pics! And I have a cat! Looks like a sphinx...

Rasa. Blimey! You can't be serious!

Deimantas. Yes, yes, yes... And I'm getting married soon!

Rasa. What?!

Deimantas. Yes, to Arina – remember, she was at my 18th birthday party, that one...

Rasa. No, well, listen, congr...

Deimantas. Wait, I have to go for a bit! *(Hangs up.)*

Pause. The phone rings again, Rasa answers.

Rasa. Yes?

Deimantas. It's me.

Rasa. I know. Everything OK?

Deimantas. Yes, yes! You know what – I just had to look... Well, I'm getting married – in two weeks! Then she can stay here overnight a couple of times a month.

Rasa. Wow... Awesome.

Deimantas. Yes... Listen, I'll call you back another day! Today, I have... There's so much going on...

Rasa. Yes, of course... Take care!

Deimantas hangs up.

Rasa. *(Shows the audience pictures.)* See, that's some cat... And I don't know what it looked like before the renovation, but afterwards – something like this. And there's a table laid for Christmas. *(Says what year it was.)* And here are his birthday cakes...

In six years, I sent him one letter by post because his parents had just got divorced.

Deimantas. *(Reads the letter.)* "I think your parents were right to get divorced. If it's not working, it's not working – they had tortured each other so much, maybe it's time they had a break from each other and took a good look at their lives.

Any news there? How are you feeling?"

(Looks around...) Any news...

Rasa. 2012.

Deimantas picks up his phone and calls Rasa. Rasa answers it.

Rasa. Hello?

Deimantas. Deividas is going to be a dad!

Rasa. What?! Why am I hearing this from you?!

Deimantas. And why not?

Silence.

Deimantas. And the old man is getting married..

Rasa. Yeah, I know.

Deimantas. Why didn't you tell me?

Silence.

Deimantas. And I'm getting divorced!

Rasa. What? Why?

Deimantas. It's nothing serious... I don't think she'll wait for me that long, I'll be so jealous I'll lose my mind... Let's just say it wasn't meant to be.

Rasa. *(To break the awkward pause.)* And Deividas is going to be a dad. Wow!

Deimantas. Yeah, it's beautiful, it's beautiful... What's new with you?

Rasa. Honestly? Nothing. I study, I write, I live by myself... Really – there's nothing new...
(To the audience) I only visited him once in six years. I didn't go to the place in the photos. I visited him in prison. 2014.

Deimantas turns up in a few moments. He smiles.

Rasa smiles, picks up the phone, they sit on either side of the glass window between them.

Deimantas. Well, hello!

Rasa. Hi! You've really grown up! That chin! You've grown a big chin.

Deimantas. Is that supposed to be a compliment?

Rasa. Of course it is. You really look even bigger than in the photos!

Deimantas. Gotta keep fit...

Rasa. *(To the audience)* How are you doing? No, stupid question – how can you be there. Just come out, let's get life back on track. Let's party, just like that summer. It was fun, huh, it was really fun! And when we were kids, it was fun even if we were bored.

Deimantas. *(Smiles.)* Yes... We could. But don't you worry, time flies! Everything is fine!

Rasa. *(To the audience)* During the meeting, he was smiling, but his face was grey. And he sent the more photos, these ones... *(Shows the photos.)* Celebrations, party, birthday, more tables laid for parties. Also, my little cousin decided to start a new life in these six years, moved to England where he was hit by a car, fell into a coma, and his dad and I flew over to visit him in the hospital. From prison, Deimantas made arrangements to get him the best possible care... To be honest, it really seemed to me that everything was fine with him when he was in jail! I was not interested in the internal

laws of the prison, I didn't know about the hierarchies that existed there, I didn't know how power was held there. I still know nothing about it. I've only read about the score-settling they had THERE to be able to live like THIS. And I've read that about half a year before he was released, he was "dethroned" and Deimantas was transferred to the other wing of the prison. I don't know what it took for him, but there he met...

Deimantas. Better not...

Rasa. *(Pause)* There, he met a guy, and together they decided to take over a huge cocaine network from another guy who was in a wheelchair...

Deimantas. *(Ironically and half to himself)* I don't understand which is worse – the "huge cocaine network" or the plan to take it away from a guy with special needs, eh...?

Rasa. *(Pause, because she doesn't like Deimantas making fun of all this.)* He was released the day after his 27th birthday. On 23 March 2015.

Rasa's phone rings.

Deimantas. *(Calls Rasa.)* Rasa?

Rasa. Hiiiiii, Deima!!! Ah, it's so great to hear from you! Yayyyyy! Where are you? When can I see you?

Deimantas. That's why I'm calling you.

Rasa. Well, well, well? And happy belated birthday! There's nothing I can wish you – you already got the best and the biggest thing, right?

Deimantas. Yes...

Rasa. Damn, it's great that you called, that you can call normally again! Wait, are you perhaps planning to come to Liepāja?

Deimantas. No, I can't do that yet.

Rasa. Oh, OK, never mind. Where will we meet?

Deimantas. Wow, you're a bit intense, aren't you?

Rasa. What do you mean? I will finally see you!

Deimantas. Well, I'll be in Palanga this weekend.

Rasa. I'll be there! I'm already on my way and will be waiting for you there! *(Laughs.)*

Deimantas. OK, OK...

Rasa.

(To the audience.) My friends agreed to take me to Palanga on the weekend so I could see Deimantas. I was so excited. I didn't know what to expect, I didn't know how to be, but the joy that he was out, I don't even know what level it was at...! Like a 100-storey house where we're all living together... *(Sees Deimantas.)* Deima!!!

Rasa runs up to him, throws her arms around his neck, squeezes and hugs him for a long, long time.

Rasa. You fool! You bloody fool!

Deimantas. Yo...

Rasa. You're out at last... Ah!

Deimantas. I am.

Rasa. At last!

Deimantas. Everything is like it used to be.

Rasa. Wohooooo, wohoooo...! *(Hugs him again.)*

Rasa. I'll be all over you today, don't even try to object! I haven't been able to do that for six years! I have to make up for everything I missed. From now on, I'll be all over you every time we meet.

Deimantas. OK, OK.

Rasa. *(Breathes hard.)* Damn... *(Smiles, strokes the back of his neck.)* Well? What will we do?

Deimantas. *(Shrugs briefly.)* Come. I'll introduce you to Vita...

Rasa. Who?

Deimantas. My girlfriend...

Rasa. *(To the audience)* We went to his rented flat and the three of us spent a couple of hours together. Vita is... Vita is a singer, she's in a girl band called Noies Bubites and they met when Vita performed with her band in prison. I felt strange during this meeting, Deimantas was pacing back and forth the whole time and then there was this Vita.

And that's how it happened, but now I wish it had been different. Like this:

Rasa throws her arms around Deimantas.

Rasa. Well? What will we do?

Deimantas. (*Shrugs briefly.*) Anything you want.

Rasa. Let's go to the seaside?

Deimantas. Let's go.

Rasa. How are you feeling?

Deimantas. I... don't know.

Rasa. Of course you don't know...

Deimantas. Mhmh...

Rasa. Grandma and grandpa send their love, they're really looking forward to seeing you.

You know how it is. My mum too – well, everyone.

Deimantas. Thank you! Cool!

Rasa. Cool! Epic!!!

Deimantas. Well, I thought that I could definitely spend a couple months in Liepāja in the summer. Like in the good old times.

Rasa. It would be cool.

Deimantas. It would be cool.

Rasa. It would be epic. (*Smiles.*)

Deimantas. Anyway, tell me what's new with you!

Rasa. No. Let's shake hands and agree that now you will tell me what's new in your life, what you're doing, why you're doing it, how you're doing it and what you're trying to achieve. Please tell me that you'll start a new life, that you'll try to find a way to just live – to have a long, long life. Tell me our kids will be spending summers together in Liepāja, and you'll stop doing these crazy things, right?

Deimantas. OK.

Rasa. But I'm totally serious!

Deimantas. Me too.

Rasa. If that's the case, I solemnly swear to you that I'll go jogging with you by the sea in the mornings.

Deimantas. OK. OK, OK, OK.

Rasa. But that's not what happened. Childhood was over in an instant. Over.

(*To the audience.*) After meeting him in Palanga, I only saw him a few more times in Liepāja, he was never alone, because he was head over heels in love with Vita! They once posted a photo on Instagram, where they posed with a champagne flute that had a bullet floating in it, with the caption "We'll definitely do it again". I didn't understand what it meant, I was rather annoyed by the photo, what champagne, what bullet?!!

The morning of 7 November 2015. I'm sleeping.

Rasa's phone rings.

Rasa. *(Picks up her phone.)* Yes, mum? *(Pause)* Yes? *(Pause)* What? *(Pause)* Pause. Pause. Pause... *(pulls herself together)*. It's better for him. He's safer now. He doesn't have to feel anxious anymore. He's better now. *(Puts the phone down.)*
That was my first reaction. Then I went down to my grandparents and started to realise how absurd the situation was. I consoled my grandparents, told them the same thing – he's better off there, he doesn't have to feel anxious anymore. Then I got angry. And then had to go to the funeral.

Deimantas. I'm sorry.

Rasa. No need, yes? *(Pause.)*

Nobody will answer my millions of questions anymore. And this summary of mine consists of shreds of information, but it goes something like this...

The guy in a wheelchair, who is Lithuanian but lives in Spain, ordered the murder of Deimantas. A tracking device was installed on Deimantas' car in the middle of September 2015. At the same time, someone bought a stolen Renault Megane in France to drive to Lithuania. They'd also acquired chemicals to destroy the evidence of the crime. At the same time, two 9-millimetre guns were smuggled to Lithuania. The weapons were handed over to the murderers in a café in Trakai district. Deimantas was then shot, and after the murder the car was burnt in the yard of a nearby house. Deimantas died, they fled, but we went to the funeral. The fucking funeral.

Deimantas. The Lithuanian funeral tradition is that the deceased lies in a kind of chapel for three days, where everyone can come to say goodbye. Everybody brings only white flowers, which are then placed and piled and piled and placed there for three days... People talk...

Rasa. People cry. People are angry. They sit and stand, silent and crying. And they regularly go to the other room where snacks and drinks are laid out, so they can get through these three days. On the last day before the cremation, I just drank vodka. A lot. And smoked. Until the evening, until the cremation. I was pretty drunk at the time of the cremation, but afterwards I decided to wait for the urn with Deividas and his friends. In the pizzeria, where I continued to drink while everyone politely tolerated it.

Rasa is totally drunk, she's looking at everything with one eye shut.

Rasa. (*Half to herself, half to the others.*) OK, I'm drunk... But he was my cousin! So what do you want?... It's not nice... No, it's not... Listen, but... Now I only have one cousin. Fuck. Deivis! I love you. I will now tell you all the time that I love you. Did you all hear? I love him. Love. I love you. And you all have to look after him, right? ... I don't have more cousins, look after him... Don't let him do anything stupid... You're doing stupid things anyway! But don't let him... You're all these great guys, great guys, oh what great guys, but you can't look after each other. Better start sooner rather than later! And there's no need to laugh. Why wasn't he wearing a bulletproof vest today? Why is there only one door? Why was he more vigilant before he was put in jail, but after prison he was so confident that he didn't even check whether he was followed? What do you mean? I don't want to go to the funerals of my cousins anymore. I don't want, don't want, don't want, don't want...

Pause.

Deimantas. So what's the sober summary?

A bottle was found in the car that was blown up after my death and they got DNA from the saliva. It belonged to a Lithuanian – the contact who made sure that the job of the Estonians went without a hitch. When the casings of the bullets that killed me were compared to those found at the scene of an attempted murder, they found the gun that was used for the hit and it led to a person called Imre Arakas, who was living in Ireland at the time. They found out that the two Estonians arrested for my murder were his “disciples”. Thus, the information circle that started with a small drop of saliva widened and in 2019, law enforcement officers from Lithuania, Poland, Spain, Estonia and the United Kingdom uncovered, as a result of an international investigation, a 22-member gang involved in illegal arms and drug trafficking and money laundering.

During the investigation, around 40 searches were carried out and around 8 million euros in cash, diamonds, gold bars and jewellery was confiscated. Around 4.5 tons of drugs were also found during the operation, including cocaine and hashish, as well as cigarettes. According to police estimates, the mafia laundered around €680 million through currency exchange between 2017 and 2019.

(*To Rasa*) So you see what's behind this – “let's take the mafia over from the legless guy”...

Rasa. But – how? Why?

Deimantas. (*Shrugs, thinking – it's not important.*) My daughter was born in summer 2016... (*Smiles.*)