

Rasa Bugavičute



## **FERMATA**

Fermata – [it. 'fermata' – a stop] (music) a sign indicating the prolongation of a note or pause for an undetermined length of time in accordance with the performer's musical sense.

### **Featuring:**

Anna – a 15 year-old schoolgirl

Egils – a 52 year-old choirmaster

Lelde – a 23 year-old student

Martins – a 17 year-old high school student

### **Place and time of action:**

Current day Latvia, Riga, the choir conducting auditorium at the Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, morning.

**2011**

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*At the choir conducting auditorium at the Latvian Academy of Music. At centre of the room there are two grand pianos, a music stand is set between them, and off to the side there is a small shelf with a CD recorder on it. Some musical scores have been laid out on one of the pianos. Egils (52) is standing by the piano, leafing through the scores. Egils has dark, slightly graying hair. He is dressed in a youthful fashion – dark blue jeans, white t-shirt, knitted sweater and sneakers. He is clearly trying to look younger than he actually is. Egils is getting ready for his lecture, trying to find the necessary music. He is putting one CD after another in the recorder, instantly avoiding romantic and lyrical scores, trying to conduct along with the rest. A moment later the auditorium door quietly opens (the key has been left in the lock on the inside), and in comes Anna (15). She is wearing her dark hair in a ponytail, and is dressed in light autumn clothes – a leather jacket (left open), a printed t-shirt underneath, blue stockings and jean shorts, sneakers (the same as Egils'), and big bag on her shoulder. Egils does not notice her entering.*

**Anna.** Hello!

*Egils carries on with his work his back turned to Anna so the girl comes closer and addresses him in a louder voice.*

**Anna.** Hello!

*Egils finally notices Anna.*

**Egils.** *(Continues to conduct, turns to Anna.)* First year, right? You're definately not in my class now.

*Anna holds out her hand, but meanwhile Egils has already turned his back to her in order to resume his conducting.*

**Anna.** My name is Anna!

*Egils does not hear Anna anymore, so Anna gives him a nudge on the shoulder, Egils startles and turns towards the girl.*

**Anna.** *(Her voice louder, still holding out her hand to Egils.)* My name is Anna!

*Egils and Anna shake hands.*

**Egils.** Which teacher are you looking for?

**Anna.** Anna Melbārde! I'm, well, your.. your daughter!

*Egils lets go of Anna's hand, takes a step back.*

**Anna.** I have my birth certificate with me! *(Anna starts rummaging around in her bag.)*

**Egils.** No, no! Don't, I.. *(Egils turns off the CD recorder. Silence.)* It's not that I don't know who you are. I.. It's just a bit sudden.. That.. *(He looks at Anna.)* Has something happened to your mom?

**Anna.** No, no, she's fine, you know, working.

**Egils.** That's good.

**Anna.** U-huh..

*Pause.*

**Egils.** You have.. nice hair. *(He points at his own hair, which is the same colour.)*

**Anna.** Thanks.

**Egils.** U-huh.

**Anna.** Cool sneakers! *(Points at her own sneakers, which are the same as Egils'.)*

**Egils.** Thanks.

**Anna.** U-huh.

**Egils.** *(After a pause.)* Wait, how old are you now, fourteen? No, fifteen!

**Anna.** I turned fifteen on June 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Egils.** Fifteen!

**Anna.** Yeah, fifteen...

**Egils.** Right, right! Sorry I didn't wish you a happy birthday, it's just that I don't have your number and..

**Anna.** Doesn't matter.

**Egils.** So how did you find me?! Did Dana tell you anything? I've tried to contact her a few times, but I haven't really managed..

**Anna.** I googled you.

**Egils.** Googled me! So, at least you knew my name!

**Anna.** It's written on the birth certificate.

**Egils.** Oh, the certificate.. And Dana didn't say anything?

*Anna shakes her head in denial. Silence, Egils is observing Anna.*

**Anna.** Actually, I have a favour to ask.

**Egils.** A favour! Obviously!

**Anna.** No, don't worry, it's not about money or me wanting to move in with you or anything.

*Egils is silent. Pause.*

**Anna.** I need your consent for an abortion.

**Egils.** What?!

**Anna.** In Latvia, persons under the age of sixteen require the consent of their legal representative to get an abortion, and..

**Egils.** Are you pregnant?

**Anna.** Yes.

**Egils.** Are you sure?

*Anna looks at Egils sceptically.*

**Egils.** You're sure.

**Anna.** I need you to be my legal representative.

**Egils.** Legal representative!

**Anna.** U-huh.

**Egils.** Why?!

**Anna.** Well..

**Egils.** What were you thinking? I.. I can't, I'm at work all the time, I have rehearsals in the evening, and.. Surely you'll change your mind, you're just freaking out now, it's only logical..

**Anna.** So you'll help me?

**Egils.** And what does Dana have to say about this?

**Anna.** Will you help me?

**Egils.** Why me?!

**Anna.** You're my father.

**Egils.** But I don't.. You don't even know me.

**Anna.** They don't care. I have the birth certificate; all they need is your presence and your passport or driver's licence.

**Egils.** Well, you can't know that for sure.

**Anna.** I googled it.

**Egils.** Oh, you googled it!

**Anna.** *(After a pause.)* Hmm?

**Egils.** No, I.. Why do I have to take responsibility now? And what does that.. that guy.. say about this.. And you, what were you thinking when all of that.. there.. ?!

**Anna.** Come on, you don't have to overreact and take it so personally, I just need your help.. It's business! Well, sort of.

**Egils.** Business! *(Pause.)* My lecture's about to begin, so...

**Anna.** *(Glances at her watch.)* You still have seven minutes left.

**Egils.** No, I have a student coming any minute now, and I have to get ready for the class..

**Anna.** *(Takes an agenda from her bag, opens it and shows it to Egils.)* Your first lecture starts at 9 AM, and it's...8:53 now.

**Egils.** My lecture begins in a moment.

**Anna.** No!

**Egils.** There now, that's enough. It begins if I say so.

*Pause.*

**Egils.** Maybe we could talk about this later..

**Anna.** What time?

**Egils.** Not "what time", but when you've thought it over again, and..

**Anna.** I have to be at the clinic at 1PM..

**Egils.** Today?!

**Anna.** And I know you have a "gap" between 12:20 and 2:10PM, so..

**Egils.** Forget it! I have choir..

**Anna.** You have choir rehearsals on Monday and Thursday evening, and Saturday morning.

*Egils is silent.*

**Anna.** I googled it.

**Egils.** Did you even know you're not supposed to be here?

*Anna is silent.*

**Egils.** You're not supposed to be here. So I'm actually very considerate, because I haven't notified anyone about you. I'm letting you leave on your own.

**Anna.** I need your help.

*Egils is silent. He goes to the shelf, pretending that Anna is not there, turns on the CD recorder, then goes to the piano and, looking at one of the musical scores, begins to conduct.*

**Anna.** I don't need your money! I hadn't planned to spend it like this, but.. well, I have my savings, see, I worked part time at a promoters' agency for a while. You know, with the sales.. Well, anyway, you don't have to worry about that.. Because I'm taking responsibility for what happened. And when it's all over, I solemnly swear you won't see me for years to come! You may never see me again.

*Egils is silent.*

**Anna.** If you don't help me, I'll have to go to the first unlicensed doctor I come across! You can die from that, you know. From infection and whatnot.. And then it'll be on your conscience, you hear?

*Egils is silent. Anna goes to the CD recorder and switches it off.*

**Anna.** If you keep on ignoring me, I'll scream.

*After a brief pause, Egils switches the CD recorder on again.*

**Anna.** Well, alright, I know you don't care what happens to me, but, well.. if you don't care, you can still help me, right? Or maybe you don't know what it means to help someone, do you?

*Egils is silent. Anna stands still for a while. Then she goes to one of the pianos and starts banging the keys with both hands.*

**Egils.** What are you doing?!

*Anna is banging the keys, Egils tries to close the piano lid and push Anna aside, but the girl nimbly dodges him, runs to the other piano, and starts banging its keys instead.*

**Egils.** Alright! I'm listening! Let's talk? Do you hear me?! Let's talk!

*Anna stops, goes to the CD recorder and turns it off.*

**Anna.** If you don't listen to me, I'll raise such a riot you won't even know what's happening, got it?

*Both of them are silent for a moment.*

**Egils.** Well, I'm listening!

**Anna.** I..

**Egils.** No! I'm not just listening, I can even try to understand, imagine that! Let's pretend that I do understand you! That I understand how hard it was for you to come here and ask something like this from me, because I'm a total stranger. But I can't help you! I just can't! Not with this, anyway! All this time I've been some kind of.. some sort of.. nothing to you, and now I have to help you with something that can change your whole life?! I can't do that! You have to talk to Dana about this.

*Anna shakes her head. Egils, in turn, nods his head in affirmation. Anna shakes her head in denial.*

**Anna.** She can't know about any of this.

**Egils.** But she's your mom!

**Anna.** Exactly! She'll never understand why I want to.. to end all of this! But you have to understand me!

**Egils.** How can I?

**Anna.** Well.. You did give up on me once, didn't you!

*Both are silent, watching each other.*

**Anna.** It's the same thing, except you didn't have to scrape anything out! *(Laughs.)* Okay. That was a dumb joke. But basically there's no difference! You decided you didn't need me, because.. I don't know why, and it doesn't matter, and I've decided that I don't want.. that.

*Egils is silent.*

**Anna.** Plus, I don't want to be a single mother!

**Egils.** You had a one night stand?

**Anna.** Geez, no, no way! But I'm only fifteen! It's not like I'm going to be with him forever! It doesn't work that way. And, please, don't moralize about safe sex, blah-blah. It just happened. *(Pause.)* So, yeah, I don't want that, see? Mom.. She just vegetates. Well, okay, maybe it's not that bad, but she just exists. She goes to work, comes home, makes dinner, and when I'm away on weekends, she complains about being bored, because she's nothing else in her life! Just

her job and me. And it's a really lame job, too, at some kind of auto shipping company. Like, what, right?! I don't want that! I have my plans, see? Come on, at least let me get my primary education!

**Egils.** You'll have to talk it over with Dana.

**Anna.** Are you even listening to what I'm saying?

**Egils.** You'll have to talk it over with Dana.

**Anna.** It's not enough that you've fucked up mom's life, now you want to fuck up mine as well?!

**Egils.** *(Pause.)* My lecture is about to begin.

**Anna.** I don't give a fuck!

*They look at each other; there is a brief pause after which Anna suddenly sits down on the floor between the two pianos, crossing her arms.*

**Egils.** Oh, my God.

*Egil goes to Anna.*

**Egils.** Get up.

**Anna.** Promise me you'll help.

**Egils.** Get up!

*Egils tries to make her stand up, but she sticks to the floor and does not move.*

**Egils.** *(Striving to raise Anna from the floor.)* She acts all grown up when she has to sleep around, but now she's a kindergartener, isn't she?

**Anna.** *(Fighting off Egils.)* Stop moralizing!

*Shortly after the auditorium door is suddenly flung open. Egils instantly stands up, while Anna remains on the floor. In comes Lelde (23). The girl is wearing a low cut purple dress, she has blond hair, high heeled shoes, a bag slung on her shoulder with a light overcoat tucked in it. As soon as Lelde sees Egils, she starts talking, comes in briskly and closes the auditorium door behind her; still talking, she locks it with the key left in the lock.*

**Lelde.** Thank God you're here! I thought you wouldn't even give me classes anymore, I've been trying to call you since Friday.. You probably didn't notice!

**Egils.** I..

**Lelde.** *(Continues to talk, ignoring Egils.)* That's alright, I know you've been busy..



*Egils goes towards Lelde to prevent her from going further into the auditorium. Anna remains on the floor. Egils and Lelde begin to talk simultaneously – Egils tries to interrupt Lelde's monologue, Lelde, in turn, seems unable to stop, wanting to follow out her thought to the end. Lelde's final words (about last Friday) ring out in the silence clearly and audibly.*

**Egils.** *(Pointedly, as if to convince Anna that there is nothing going on between him and Lelde.)* Yes, I was busy! On my days off I usually try to take leave from my educational duties. Maybe we can talk about it after class?

**Lelde.** ..or you just hadn't switched on the sound on your cell phone, or maybe you just wanted to be alone for a bit, I understand all that! That's why I didn't come, and.. but now that I'm here, and.. well, you're also here, and.. I just thought that.. actually, I just wanted to tell you something, because last Friday was so..

**Egils.** *(Suddenly, in a loud voice.)* I have a visitor! *(Points at Anna.)*

*Lelde slowly stoops, in order to see the place indicated by Egils, meanwhile Anna briskly stands up, startling Lelde.*

**Lelde.** Oh, how awful! Oh God! Sorry, I'm sorry, that is to say, no, that's the wrong form.. forgive me! That's right! Oh, how awful! I didn't mean to bother you! I.. Outside..

*Lelde turns towards the door, wanting to leave, but Egils stops her.*

**Egils.** No, no! Come back! I mean – please, do come back!

**Lelde.** But..

**Anna.** What happened last Friday?

*Again, Lelde wants to leave through the auditorium door, but Egils holds her back.*

**Egils.** Nothing happened! Did something happen? We had a perfectly ordinary class, and afterwards Lelde apparently wanted to discuss something further with me. And now it's time for another perfectly ordinary class, which you, Anna, will kindly not interfere with!

*Anna, seeing that Egils is trying to make use of the situation to get rid of her, sits down in a chair near the auditorium door.*

**Anna.** No problem! I'll just wait here then.

**Lelde.** Forgive me, I didn't mean to disturb you. And anyway, one's personal life is a personal matter. Or should I say private? I don't know which is correct. Oh, God, what am I talking about..

**Egils.** *(Takes the bag from Lelde's shoulder; puts it down and leads her to the music stand.)* Now don't you worry!

**Lelde.** Next time I will definitely knock on the door, it..

**Egils.** Quiet!

*Lelde stops talking, Egils steps away from her and goes to the piano with the scores laid out on it, Lelde remains by the music stand, her eyes cast down, Anna observes.*

**Egils.** So then! Because the accompanist..

**Lelde.** As!

**Egils.** What?

**Lelde.** Not "because", but "as", it.. Oh God, it doesn't matter, forgive me.

*Brief interval of silence.*

**Egils.** So then, where was I.. Unfortunately, as our accompanist is not well today, we'll have to make do with the recordings..

**Anna.** Oh, the accompanist is not well?

**Egils.** Yes, she is not well!

**Lelde.** *(Murmuring to herself.)* This is a nightmare, how could I, so stupid..

**Egils.** *(Goes to Lelde, grabs her by the shoulder.)* Lelde! You.. you do understand that our lecture is about to begin?

**Lelde.** But I don't..

**Egils.** No excuses!

**Lelde.** Yes.. Of course! To be sure..

**Egils.** Excellent. Peace at last. Now then.. *(He grabs one of the scores, puts a page on the music stand.)* Let's read from the page, shall we? We'll start with this little peace, it's sort of.. dynamic, please, take a look at the score, you may begin when you're ready.

**Lelde.** And then.. To conduct - what?

**Egils.** What, what.. Not what, but how! Music isn't just sound, it's also emotion.. A parallel universe! I want to see you, what I mean is, please, let me see how you go through it inside yourself. That's all. Work now, um.. please!

*Lelde looks at the notes for a moment, and then begins to conduct in complete silence. Egils stands behind her, looking at the score, every so often he adjusts Lelde's hands –*

*the joints at the palms, the elbows. He clearly hears the music in his head, he is following Lelde's every move.*

**Egils.** You have to be smoother at this point! Elbows up now! Be more precise with your left hand!

*Egils and Lelde continue their work, but as soon as Egils touches Lelde (for example, raises up her elbow), the girl startles and turns away, making mistakes etc. Obviously, she feels timid in front of Egils, and Anna's presence makes her even more awkward.*

**Egils.** *(Gesticulating.)* There now, there's the fermata! Hold it! Hold it still! Hold it!

*The pause drags on, while Egils makes Lelde "hold" the fermata.*

**Anna.** That's enough!

*Lelde stops her conducting.*

**Egils.** *(To Anna.)* If you want to sit here, don't interrupt. *(To Lelde.)* That was quite good. Let's see now how they perform it here..

*Egils finds the piece on the CD, puts it on and, his eyes closed, tries to feel the music, while Lelde stands still. Meanwhile, Anna stands up, goes to the CD recorder and turns it off. Egils startles.*

**Egils.** What's the meaning of this?

**Anna.** You do understand now, don't you, that I could go the head of university this very minute and tell him that you're sleeping with your students?

**Egils.** What do you..?

**Anna.** You are, aren't you!

**Egils.** *(Laughs.)* What?

**Anna.** I'm not as stupid as you think.

*A moment of silence, interrupted by Lelde, who stoops to pick up her bag, meanwhile Anna runs to the auditorium door, takes the key out of the lock and puts in her pocket.*

**Egils.** What are you doing?!

**Anna.** Nobody's going anywhere.

**Egils.** *(To Anna.)* Let her go!

**Anna.** No. We're going to sit here until it's time to go to the clinic, and you'll have to promise to come with me right now, and she'll bear witness to your promise, otherwise I swear – not just the whole Academy, but the all the tabloids in Latvia will learn that you sleep with your students.

**Egils.** I don't sleep with my students!

**Anna.** We'll see if they let you be a chief conductor of the Latvian Youth Song and Dance Festival from now on.

**Egils.** What does the youth have to do with any of this? I don't sleep with my students! *(To Lelde.)* You tell her!

**Anna.** *(Not waiting for Lelde's answer.)* So, is that how you address her formally?

**Egils.** *(To Anna.)* Stop it! You.. What's wrong with you anyway?! Have you gone queer in the head or something?! I'm not promising anything and you're not telling anyone! It's not like you have any proof! There is nothing going on between us!

**Anna.** Is that so?

**Egils.** No one will believe you!

**Anna.** Do you really think that, once I've told everyone who I am and what our relationship is, they'll still believe that you're the one with nothing to hide here?

*Lelde starts breathing deeply, pulls an inhalator from her bag and inhales from it.*

**Egils.** *(Laughs.)* What's the deal with these stupid intrigues?

**Anna.** If they're so stupid, why are you all wired up then?

**Egils.** *(To Anna.)* Let her go!

**Anna.** Promise me you'll help.

**Egils.** Okay, now then – why do you have drag a complete stranger into this mess?

**Anna.** A stranger? *(To Lelde.)* Is he a stranger to you?

**Lelde.** *(Softly.)* I want some explanations.

**Egils.** *(To Anna.)* I'm her teacher!

**Anna.** *(To Egils.)* Well now! I'll tell the head of university to give you a bonus! Because, in addition to conducting classes, you teach some of these girls a thing or two on the side!

**Egils.** *(Approaching Anna.)* You..

**Anna.** If you hit me, that'll make my story even better!

**Egils.** Who said anything about hitting anyone?!

**Lelde.** *(Out loud.)* I want to hear some explanations!

*Egils and Anna stop, both are silent for a while.*

**Lelde.** *(To Egils.)* She already knows everything!

*Pause.*

**Egils.** Alright, alright, fine. What's the difference anyway? You see, Anna is.. She is..

**Anna.** *(Holds out her hand to Lelde.)* I'm his daughter.

*Silence.*

**Lelde.** You.. I mean, what, do you have a family?

**Egils.** What, no way, a family? No!

**Anna.** *(To Lelde.)* Don't worry, he doesn't bother about such minor details.

**Egils.** It's the first time we've met.

**Anna.** But he knew that I existed, so it's not that bad. He just didn't care much.

**Egils.** *(To Anna.)* That's enough!

*For a while all of them are silent. Then Lelde heads towards the door.*

**Egils.** *(Stops Lelde.)* Sorry, it's just so complicated.

**Anna.** Oh, is it?

**Egils.** *(To Anna.)* Will you let me finish!? *(After a pause, to Lelde.)* Back then I loved her mother, she was born, and we separated. That was fifteen years ago, anyway, I don't want to go through it all again. Now she's here. And I'm just as surprised as you are.

**Lelde.** Surprised?! She's your child! You've got a child! Why haven't you seen each other these fifteen years?! And another thing.. I have to get out! *(Heads for the door.)*

**Egils.** *(Attempts to stop Lelde by putting a hand on her shoulder.)* Pumpkin, the door's closed.

**Lelde.** *(Dodging Egils' grasp.)* No pumpkins now! *(After a pause, to Anna.)* Let me out.

**Anna.** See, you could ask your sweetheart, because when he promises to help me, everything will be alright again!

**Lelde.** *(To Egils.)* What does she mean by "promising to help"?

**Egils.** She wants to get an abortion.

*Silence.*

**Anna.** Oh, God, it's not like it's a big deal or the end of the world! I just need my legal representative's consent, that's all.

**Lelde.** Why?

**Anna.** Because in Latvia persons under the age of sixteen can only get an abortion with the consent of their legal representative.

**Lelde.** No, why do you want to do it?

**Egils.** She doesn't want to be a single mother.

**Anna.** I have plans.

**Egils.** Primary education!

**Anna.** I have other plans, too!

*Silence.*

**Anna.** Oh, God, like, if Madonna had gotten a baby when she was fifteen, she wouldn't have become what she is now, not in a hundred years!

**Egils.** What?

**Anna.** That was just an example, okay?

**Egils.** Her mother isn't aware of this, and she doesn't care what the child's father thinks about it.

**Anna.** What difference does it make what he thinks?! Anyway, he doesn't...not me and that.. that..

**Egils.** It's not "that", it's your baby!

**Anna.** *(To Egils.)* He'd end up leaving us anyway, just like you left mom and me. So don't you act like some big old protector and defender of justice in front of everyone, okay? First you made me and afterwards you dumped me, so at least I'm going to do it straight away, before anyone else gets hurt.

*Silence.*

**Egils.** Fine!

*Anna and Lelde are silent.*

**Egils.** *(Takes Anna by the hand and leads her to the door.)* Let's go!

**Lelde.** Egils, what are you doing..

**Anna.** Go where?

**Egils.** To the clinic! Right now.

**Lelde.** Egils, don't..

**Egils.** You stay out of this, alright?!

**Anna.** *(To Egils.)* Promise me we'll go the clinic, and there you'll say that you agree to everything?

**Egils.** Yes.

*Egils and Anna head for the door, Anna is already fishing for the key in her shorts' pocket.*

**Lelde.** I'm pregnant!

*Egils and Anna freeze halfway to the door, they both look at Lelde. Silence. Suddenly there is a knock on the door then somebody starts pulling at the doorknob.*

*For a moment all three of them stand completely still, listening to the noise outside the door.*

**Mārtiņš behind the door.** Anybody in there?!

*Anna, having heard the voice, motions to Egils to keep silent.*

**Mārtiņš behind the door.** Hullo!

**Egils.** *(To Anna, in a whisper.)* What is the meaning of this?

*Anna motions to Egils to keep silent.*

**Mārtiņš behind the door.** The old lady on duty told me you were here! I'm Mārtiņš! I'm your daughter's boyfriend! You know, Anna! I wanted to talk to you about her.

*Everybody is silent.*

**Mārtiņš behind the door.** Yeah, by the way, Anna, are you in there?

*Anna still motions to Egils to keep quiet, while Mārtiņš continues to bang on the door.*

**Mārtiņš behind the door.** Hullo!

**Egils.** *(In a loud voice.)* Just a minute! There's no need for all this noise, okay?

**Mārtiņš behind the door.** *(Stops banging.)* I'm sorry! Hello!

*Egils reaches towards Anna, demanding the keys, but Anna does not hand them over.*

**Egils.** *(To Anna.)* Now then, stop this nonsense.

*Anna shakes her head.*

**Egils.** I don't want to get into trouble because of this hullabaloo, alright? Just give me the keys, now.

**Anna.** *(Whispers.)* No!

**Egils.** Give me the keys!

**Anna.** *(Whispers.)* I don't want to see him!

**Egils.** *(In a loud voice.)* Anna's here!

**Anna.** *(Loudly, to Mārtiņš.)* I don't want to see you!

**Lelde.** Maybe he has something important to tell you.

**Anna.** Well, it's not like he can get pregnant.

**Egils.** Give me the keys.

**Anna.** Forget it!

**Egils.** Give me the keys!

*Anna shakes her head. Egils waits for a while then grabs hold of Anna and tries to find the auditorium keys in her pockets. Anna struggles to break free.*

**Anna.** Get your hands off me!

**Mārtiņš behind the door.** Hey!

*Lelde runs to the auditorium door and starts talking to Mārtiņš.*

**Lelde.** *(To Mārtiņš.)* Don't worry, everything's alright!

**Mārtiņš behind the door.** What's going on in there?

**Lelde.** My name is Lelde, I'm a.. student. Anna won't give Egils the keys! But nobody's trying to hurt her.

**Mārtiņš behind the door.** Anna, are you okay?

**Anna.** *(To Mārtiņš.)* Go away!

**Mārtiņš behind the door.** No!

**Lelde.** *(To Mārtiņš.)* Don't you worry, she's alright!



*While Lelde is talking to Mārtiņš, who keeps banging at the door and pulling at the handle, Egils has managed to get the keys from Anna's pocket and goes to the door to unlock it. As soon as the door is open, Mārtiņš rushes into the auditorium.*

*Mārtiņš is seventeen, wearing blue jeans, a checkered shirt, an overstuffed rucksack on his back, and sneakers; his hair is dark brown and tousled. He takes in the situation. A moment of silence.*

**Mārtiņš.** *(To Anna.)* You alright?

**Anna.** Go away.

*Mārtiņš takes his rucksack off his shoulders, rummages around in it for a while, takes a small plastic bag with a ring from one of the pockets, drops the rucksack, goes to Anna, kneels before her and, taking the ring from the plastic bag, offers it to her.*

**Mārtiņš.** Well?

*Anna is silent, Egils laughs. Silence.*

**Mārtiņš.** Will you marry me?

*Anna is silent.*

**Mārtiņš.** I think that'd solve everything!

**Egils.** A ring?!

**Lelde.** *(To Egils.)* Shush!

*Anna shakes her head in denial.*

**Mārtiņš.** It'll be awesome!

**Anna.** Too late. *(Points to Egils.)* He agreed to be my legal representative.

**Mārtiņš.** *(To Egils.)* You can't!

**Egils.** I..

**Lelde.** *(To Egils.)* Take back what you said!

**Anna.** Oh, God, what is this, a game?!

**Egils.** I take back what I said!

**Anna.** What?!

**Egils.** I take back what I said!

**Mārtiņš.** Thank you!

**Anna.** Are you all nuts?!

**Egils.** But look – he wants to take responsibility!

**Anna.** That's not enough for me!

**Egils.** I can help you two as well!

**Anna.** Not us, but me! I need you to help *me*!

**Egils.** It's not just about you anymore!

**Anna.** See here, why don't you think about your own child instead of mine!

**Egils.** You are my child!

**Anna.** *(To Lelde.)* I feel for you, totally. *(To Egils.)* So what are you saying, that I should marry that guy, huh? *(Points at Mārtiņš)*

**Mārtiņš.** Hey, I'm not "that guy".

**Egils.** Well.. yes! You two have to work this out together and..

**Anna.** Meaning, you're going to marry that one there? *(Points at Lelde.)*

**Mārtiņš.** *(To Lelde.)* She's not like that usually. It must be the hormones.

*Egils is silent.*

**Anna.** Ha! You're planning on working this out the same way you did fifteen years ago!

**Lelde.** *(To Egils.)* I'd better go now.

**Anna.** *(To Egils.)* So what do you want from me?

*Lelde is leaving the auditorium, Egils grabs her by the arm.*

**Egils.** Stay!

**Anna.** My, my, a knight in shining armor. *(To Mārtiņš.)* Why don't you leave instead?

*Mārtiņš is silent.*

**Egils.** *(To Lelde.)* Just wait a bit, please..

**Anna.** *(To Lelde.)* You'd sooner die than get anything from him.

*Lelde is silent. Egils grabs Lelde by the arm, looks closely into her eyes.*

**Egils.** *(To Lelde.)* Please.

*Anna laughs.*

**Egils.** *(To Lelde.)* Please?

*Lelde nods, agreeing to stay in the auditorium. A moment of silence.*

**Mārtiņš.** *(To Anna.)* Will you marry me?

**Anna.** No!

**Mārtiņš.** Do you really think you'll manage all by yourself?

**Anna.** Go away!

**Egils.** That's..

**Lelde.** *(Interrupts Egils in mid sentence.)* Let them settle this on their own!

**Mārtiņš.** Just think about it first!

**Anna.** Go away!

**Mārtiņš.** I'm ready to marry you, don't you see? A marriage license, a church wedding, the whole shebang; anything to make you see it's for real. Just.. just tell me what you want! We'll be young parents!

*Anna plugs her ears, shuts her eyes and starts humming a silly tune, while Mārtiņš keeps talking, raising his voice so Anna would hear him despite her singing.*

**Mārtiņš.** We'll be the best parents in the world! See, in China or whatever there was this couple who had a baby at the age of eight or nine, so.. so you can say we we're actually experienced!

*Mārtiņš stops talking, still kneeling in front of Anna. Anna, not hearing him speak anymore, opens her eyes and lowers her hands.*

**Anna.** Please, go away!

**Mārtiņš.** *(Takes his rucksack, starts pulling out all kinds of things from it – a jar of pickles, sausage, gummy bears, two packets of juice, plastic bags.)* Look here! I'll help you! I'll go wherever you go and bring along everything you need. I have two younger brothers, I know the score.

**Anna.** You don't say..

**Mārtiņš.** Look! I've prepared everything, I've got it all figured out. Say you're walking in the street and you get thirsty, and I'll say – have some juice! Do you want this kind or the other? You want some sausage – here you go! I've got some. You want a pickle – here you go! You want to throw up – here, take this bag!

*Egils laughs, and Lelde hits him on the shoulder.*

**Mārtiņš.** We could be like his, or.. well, her best friends! Well?

*Anna is silent, she is looking at the things laid out on the floor. A moment of silence.*

**Egils.** Well then?

**Lelde.** Oh, no you don't, you can't interfere with situations like this!

**Egils.** But I..

**Anna.** *(To Mārtiņš.)* No!

**Lelde.** *(To Egils.)* See?

**Mārtiņš.** I've submitted my animations to four different contests...

**Anna.** About time!

**Mārtiņš.** There could be real money in it. Maybe I'll get lucky! And I'll see where else I can submit them..

**Anna.** *(To Egils.)* Tell him he's not supposed to be here!

**Mārtiņš.** I'll even work on a construction site, and.. I'll go and weed radishes in Tajikistan or whatever, if I have to.

**Anna.** What a joke.. Go straight to Tajikistan then, why don't you?

**Mārtiņš.** I'm not joking! I'd do anything for you two!

**Anna.** There is no "we two", okay?!

**Mārtiņš.** But Anna, we can totally do this, it'll be awesome!

**Anna.** Oh, God, yadayadayada.. You're repeating yourself!

**Egils.** You're repeating yourself too, you know.

*Anna stops talking, sits down on the floor, purses her lips and crosses her arms.*

**Mārtiņš.** *(Sighs and stands up.)* Well, that's that.

**Lelde.** What do you mean – that's that!?

**Mārtiņš.** She just won't talk anymore. She'll just sit there until she gets her own way.

**Egils.** Some character, eh? *(Laughs.)*

**Lelde.** It's a psychological block. Little children tend to do that, when they're tired of walking. You know, to make their parents carry them for a bit. I read it in a magazine.. by chance.

**Mārtiņš.** *(Stoops before Anna.)* I just want it all to be awesome, alright?

*Anna does not even move and stays silent.*

**Lelde.** I really don't like this kind of silence.. I mean, the angry kind.

**Egils.** No, it's alright! *(To Anna.)* You just sit right there, pumpkin! That way we can't get to the clinic by 1PM and all's well with the world. You'll just be a mom and that's that. *(Pause. To Mārtiņš.)* Say, you have Dana's number, right?

**Mārtiņš.** Yeah, I do.

**Lelde.** Are you going to call your.. her mother?

**Egils.** Well, yes! If nobody objects, I'll just tell her that Anna's here and so on...

*Mārtiņš takes his phone from his trouser pocket, Egils reaches for it, but just when Mārtiņš is about to hand the phone to Egils, Anna jumps up suddenly and rushes in between them, knocking the phone from their hands; it flies off, shattering to pieces.*

**Anna.** What's wrong with you?!

*Lelde starts picking up the parts strewn about the auditorium.*

**Anna.** I just don't want it. I don't want it, I don't, I don't, I don't!!

*Silence.*

**Anna.** *(Goes to Mārtiņš and jabs her finger in his chest.)* I don't want to go to my prom, looking like some sort of meat-ball! I have to record a song, win the Eurovision contest and go far away!

**Mārtiņš.** No, you're just scared.

**Anna.** No, I just don't want to. I don't want to listen to mom cry and cry, and cry, and cry all night long, I'm tired of it! I want to be able to do things differently, don't you get it?! So now is not the right time! *(Goes to Egils, continues talking to him.)* And you, who made you boss here? At least I'm just fifteen, what's your excuse, huh?!

*Egils is silent.*

**Mārtiņš.** *(To Anna.)* I love you.

**Anna.** Go away!

**Mārtiņš.** But..

**Anna.** So I should just drop dead from happiness now, is that it? People are born, grow up and die without love. All you need are a few vital organs and you're good to go!

**Mārtiņš.** Anna..

**Lelde.** But what happened to Egils and your mother might not happen to you...

**Anna.** Oh yeah, I'll have fairies hovering around me, strewing pink glitter all over my head..

**Lelde.** I didn't..

**Anna.** *(To Lelde.)* You don't get it, do you – that you're acting like some naive goat that's just wandered out of its pasture, rolling its eyes about, not knowing a damn thing about the real world?!

**Lelde.** I..

**Anna.** Duh, he's not going to marry you! You're not going to have a family with him! He doesn't care about that. He just sows and doesn't reap shit! Hah! What a joke!

*Silence.*

**Anna.** *(Goes to Mārtiņš.)* So you love me, do you? But you already told me once to do what I want. Well then, let's stick to that.

**Mārtiņš.** Well I'm sorry! You just kept going on about how bad everything was, aaaaah, panic, it's all so terrible, we can't do it, you'll leave me, I won't record that song, blah-blah-blah, I got scared and made a mistake, because..

**Anna.** Because?

**Mārtiņš.** Well, it isn't easy, hearing how bad everything is all the time.. How bad I am!

**Anna.** Well, then don't listen!

**Mārtiņš.** No way! When you ran off, I just understood right away that you were in trouble, and then I remembered you telling me that you'd get your father's consent for this..

**Lelde.** *(To Anna.)* Why were you so certain about something like that?

**Anna.** *(To Lelde.)* Because people don't change.

**Egils.** Anna..

**Mārtiņš.** Well, I used Google to see where I can find him *(Points at Egils.)*, and now I'm here, and.. Will you marry me?

**Anna.** No way!

**Mārtiņš.** You're only saying that now..

**Anna.** *(Laughs.)* You're such an idiot!

**Mārtiņš.** I'm ready to suffer for all this, so that..

**Anna.** Yeah, well then, suffer! SUFFER like crazy!

**Mārtiņš.** Oh, God.. Look, I just want it all to work out for us.

**Anna.** Well, that's cool. I'm falling to the ground, twitching in ecstasy.

**Mārtiņš.** I love you.

**Anna.** You don't understand anything! (*Points at Egils.*) He once said he loved my mom! Now he loves her! (*Points at Lelde.*)

**Egils.** No!

**Lelde.** No?

**Egils.** (*To Lelde.*) Well, not like that! Anyway, I.. Please, just wait. We'll work it out right away..

**Anna.** (*To Mārtiņš.*) I bet he's had dozens of babes in between! Who says that what you're trying to tell me now isn't just another copy-paste version of his..

**Egils.** Stop saying things you don't know!

**Anna.** What don't I know?

**Egils.** You're not even listening to him!

**Anna.** Who are you anyway, telling me what I should and shouldn't do, huh?! I came to you with a particular favour to ask, I don't want you telling me how to live my life all of a sudden. So just tell me – are you going to help me or not!

**Egils.** Anna..

**Anna.** (*To Mārtiņš.*) And you, just go away. Love.. Look at them! (*Points to Lelde and Egils.*) It's nothing more than an overblown, screwed-up bubble they've made, because people don't want to be lonely, they don't want to die alone and helpless. (*Pushing Mārtiņš out of the auditorium.*) So just go away and get over it.

**Mārtiņš.** I'm not going!

**Anna.** You're in high school! Your dad won't allow us to sleep in the same bed, let alone marry! So what, are we going to live apart, is that it? And what about you getting grounded again, for something your brothers did? You'll sit in your room, drawing your cartoons, while I rummage through nappies? And anyway, what's the big idea?! You know damn well what I want to do, so how dare you feed me this bullshit about marriage, when you know it's going to get in the way! So then, if you love me, just go away and stay out my life.

*Mārtiņš stands still for a while, then leaves the auditorium. Egils follows Mārtiņš, Anna stands in Egils' way.*

**Anna.** Yes or no?

**Egils.** *(To Lelde.)* Will you help? *(Motions to the door, asking Lelde to go after Mārtiņš.)*

*Lelde leaves the auditorium. Silence.*

**Egils.** Anna, there are few things you should understand before you destroy everything you've got.

**Anna.** Yes or no?!

*Anna is holding her tears back in anger.*

**Egils.** Anna..

**Anna.** *(Crying.)* Yes or no?

*Anna hides her face, so Egils would not see her crying. Egils stands still for a while, not saying anything, then goes to the girl, tries to embrace her, but Anna pushes him away.*

**Egils.** *(Stepping away from Anna.)* Alright, alright.

*Silence, only Anna's sobbing can be heard.*

**Egils.** About Dana.. I tried, alright? But back then, I was convinced that she wanted me to go – so that her pain would be real, not just imaginary. I thought that it'd be best for everyone, because she.. See, you can't risk it all like that, when you've got everything! You might think it sounds strange, coming from me, but.. Like, for instance, when you were barely a week old, she followed me here to see if I was actually working! Fuck it, she'd drag you along, even when she was creeping about in the bushes near the school! Well.. I don't know, I probably did something wrong, too, it's just that.. I got scared. It wasn't just Dana, I was also really scared about things not working out! I was just so scared.

**Anna.** And you aren't anymore?

**Egils.** I don't know. Back then, family definitely wasn't a priority for me. My parents, meaning, your grand-parents, they hardly ever spoke at home. Well, if I wanted to be with someone who doesn't speak, I'd live with a hamster! But they just went on sitting side by side at the dinner table, in total silence. And then, all of a sudden, I find myself in some weird family that's supposedly mine, but all I ever get are reproaches, nonstop. Dana, nagging me every day about my leaving her, she.. Well, that's what she got! I didn't want to spend



the rest of my life like that. You know. having someone shit on me all the time because I'm not good enough, no matter how hard I try.. *(Pause.)* I thought it would stop there. But, actually, it was the fear that was to blame all along, the fear of things not working out. *(Pause.)* A real wuss, aren't I? *(Pause.)* I know! I know I should've been more considerate, or something...But it has to work both ways, see? *(Pause.)* When I left.. When it happened, I couldn't sleep at night. I heard you crying in my dreams all the time. So I drank. Typical, isn't it? Drank like brute. *(Pause.)* I really didn't think it would go that far, when she and I met.

**Anna.** At the market.

**Egils.** Yes, at the butchers'! In the meat pavilion! We met amid slaughtered livestock, arguing about which one of us would get the best hog's head.

**Anna.** Yuck.

**Egils.** It's absurd! *(Laughs.)* Did she tell you?

**Anna.** I found her diary.

**Egils.** Oh..

**Anna.** She doesn't know. But I've always believed what I'd read about you there, rather than what she tells me now.

**Egils.** Then she has told you something.

**Anna.** Yes. That you're such a jerk it's disgusting even to talk about you.

*Egils laughs.*

**Anna.** But in her diary she compares you to a young Brando.

**Egils.** *(Laughs.)* Oh, God, yes, she'd even call me Marlon sometimes!

**Anna.** First I thought, what the fuck?!

**Egils.** Hey.

**Anna.** Sorry. Well, and then I googled it. You're not actually like him, but I did watch a few movies. They were kind of okay. Well, for back then at least.

**Egils.** Yes. *(Pause.)* Then you must also know, how it all..?

**Anna.** Huh?

**Egils.** ..Ended?

**Anna.** No.

**Egils.** U-huh.

**Anna.** I don't know why, but when you actually started dating, she stopped writing those memoirs of hers. As if she'd gotten what she wanted.

**Egils.** I see.

*Pause.*

**Egils.** You know, I'll really.. help you deal with all of this, if you decide to keep it as it is..

*Anna is silent.*

**Egils.** Do you hear me?

**Anna.** Do you really believe in love?

**Egils.** I guess I do.

**Anna.** Because?

**Egils.** Usually you start believing only when it's too late.

*Anna laughs.*

**Egils.** What?

**Anna.** You said that like a kooky old slobbering romantic of a Brando.

*Egils laughs. Pause.*

**Anna.** Do you love her?

**Egils.** Dana?

**Anna.** No, the jumpy one.

**Egils.** Lelde? *(Laughs.)* Yes, she is jumpy, isn't she.. Both of her parents are teachers, can you imagine?

**Anna.** Oh, so that's why she's so.. "not "because", but "as""!

**Egils.** U-huh.

**Anna.** But do you love her?

**Egils.** I..

*Lelde returns to the auditorium. She goes and picks up Mārtiņš' rucksack.*

**Lelde.** Excuse me, I'll just be a minute!

*Lelde starts putting everything back into Mārtiņš' rucksack.*

**Egils.** (To Lelde.) How does it look?

**Lelde.** I have to bring him his things.

*Anna draws a sharp breath, as one does after crying.*

**Egils.** Is he.. gone?

**Anna.** Too late! He's gone.

**Egils.** No, wait, just because he has left doesn't mean you can't go after him!

**Anna.** Enough! See, now? See? Now I'll become just like my mom, see?

**Egils.** Hey, wait, easy now..

**Anna.** No, really! She's not like that because she had to raise me on her own, but because you left and she didn't go after you! Because both of you screwed up, even though you could've avoided it!

**Egils.** Then..

*Anna runs towards the door, but just then Mārtiņš comes into the auditorium. Silence.  
Anna stops, she draws another sharp breath.*

**Mārtiņš.** Are you crying?

**Anna.** No.

*Mārtiņš goes to his backpack, takes out a packet of paper handkerchiefs and gives it to Anna. Anna hesitates then takes a handkerchief. Mārtiņš goes to Lelde. Anna stands still, hesitates to talk.*

**Mārtiņš.** (To Lelde.) Thanks, I'll do it myself.

*Mārtiņš starts putting his things into the backpack. Slowly and meticulously.*

**Lelde.** (Rising to her feet.) Don't mention it.. Then I'll just..

*Lelde wants to leave the auditorium, Egils stops her.*

**Egils.** (To Lelde.) Wait.

**Lelde.** I have to go.

**Egils.** How come?!

**Lelde.** Just so.

**Anna.** (To Lelde.) You're not going anywhere!

**Lelde.** Because..?

**Anna.** *(Suddenly.)* If you leave, it may be too late.

**Egils.** Anna, it's..

**Anna.** You said it yourself! *(To Lelde.)* That's what he said.

**Egils.** I..

**Lelde.** I have to go.

**Egils.** But.. What about..

**Lelde.** I'm not pregnant. I lied.

**Egils.** What?

**Mārtiņš.** Fuck! Sorry. It's..

**Egils.** You don't kid about stuff like that.

**Mārtiņš.** That's right! *(To Anna.)* You too maybe?

**Anna.** No way.

**Egils.** *(To Lelde.)* Why?!

**Lelde.** I.. had to stop you.

**Egils.** You couldn't have known it would work.

**Lelde.** Well then, let's just say I wanted to know how you'd react.

**Egils.** Why?!

**Lelde.** It's not like you want it anyway, that's for sure.

*Lelde grabs her bag and leaves the auditorium. Egils stays in place.*

**Anna.** *(To Egils.)* What was that all about? Why are you still here?

*Egils is silent.*

**Anna.** Hey!

*Pause.*

**Egils.** My lecture is about to begin.

**Anna.** What?!

**Egils.** My lecture is about to begin.

**Anna.** If you don't go after her, it might be too late for you too!

*Egils is silent.*

**Anna.** What are you so afraid of?!

*A moment of silence. Mārtiņš has gathered all his things, he stands up and is leaving the auditorium. Anna grabs him by the hand, pause.*

**Anna.** *(To Mārtiņš.)* It's not like I'm not afraid, but.. Let's be afraid together, okay?

*Silence. Then Mārtiņš nods to Anna.*

**Anna.** *(Leaving, to Egils, silently.)* Pull yourself together!

*Anna and Mārtiņš leave the auditorium. Egils is left alone in the room. After a while he goes to the CD recorder, turns it on and goes to the piano with the musical scores on it, resumes his work, trying to find the right music for conducting.*

*The end.*