

Rasa Bugavičute

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Character list:

Rēzija Kalniņa (41), actress
Elmārs Senkovs (28), director

You can find out more about the main characters by using the web browsing program google.com.

Setting:

The chamber hall at the Daile Theatre, rehearsals from 16/09 to 16/11.

2012

“Nobody ever said that life was a fairytale with a happy ending. Life is painful, but also insanely beautiful. I recently found out some people thought I was clever and calculating. Ironical, isn't it – the more up-front you are, the more they think you're conniving and hiding things. As if nobody could be that open.”

From an interview with Rēzija Kalniņa, 1998

Elmārs and Rēzija are both on stage in the chamber hall. Elmārs is holding a black binder full of interviews with Rēzija.

Elmārs. (*Addressing the audience.*) It all started when I got the chance to stage a performance right here at the Daile Theatre. With the actress of my dreams. With Rēzija Kalniņa (*Pause. Points to Rēzija.*) This is Rēzija Kalniņa.

Rēzija is silent.

Elmārs. This binder contains all the interviews that Rēzija Kalniņa has given since 1993. We have them all here because we thought this material would make a good starting point.

Rēzija. Because...?

Elmārs. Because... (*Leafs through the binder, starts reading.*) Quoting Rēzija Kalniņa: “It's very hard to talk about things that matter, because you have to look deep inside yourself, and then you suddenly find that you're either completely empty or full of pain.” And I quote: “I act out events and conflicts, and breakups, and meetings. The main thing is to have something going on all the time, to keep your soul agitated.” I quote: “As a woman, I like to comply. But an actress – no.” Quote: “I can be happy ten times a day, or I can cry out in pain – also ten times a day.” Quote: “I feel as if there are two separate beings living inside me. Sometimes the crazy one does things that leave me puzzled. I'm puzzled by the peace inside me, and also by the madness. But all in all, I don't really know myself. I look in the mirror and think – who is this stranger. I'm afraid of mirrors.”

Rēzija. When did I say that?

Elmārs. 1993.

Rēzija. U-huh. From an interview with Elmārs Seņkovs, 2011. Quote: “I'd like to see what would happen if I met the actress of my dreams, an experienced actress who has played every possible part. What could I offer? Nothing, except a dialogue – with her. That is, if she agrees.”

Elmārs. (*Pause. Impressed with Rēzija's “research”. Finds an article in his binder, reads.*) Quote: “I don't want to die alone, with ten books written about me.” One of them has already been published!

Rēzija. From an interview with Elmārs Seņkovs, 2012. Quote: “I hope she won't be offended, but to me Rēzija is a woman with a cigarette between her teeth, teary-

eyed, just sitting there with her legs crossed. That's how I see her – as a sufferer. But is she really like that, or is it only a made-up character? *(Pause.)* It might not lead anywhere, but I think it will be an interesting process.”

Elmārs. Yes, I hoped so.

Rēzija. By the way, Richard Bach once said that you shouldn't always fulfill your dream because it might turn into a nightmare.

Pause. Rēzija goes and sits down at the table. Elmārs stays still for a while, looks at Rēzija, then takes his place at the edge of the stage.

Elmārs. Legs...Arms...Eyes...Smile.

Rēzija strikes a pose, becoming “Destructive Rēzija”.

Silence.

Rēzija, without taking her eyes off Elmārs, takes a cigarette from her packet and puts it in her mouth. Waits. After a while Elmārs suddenly realizes he should light the cigarette, starts searching his pockets, finds some matches, lights one and brings it over to Rēzija to light her cigarette. When it is done, he checks if there is an ashtray within Rēzija's reach, then takes a seat. Pause.

Elmārs. *(Presents himself, nervously shaking his leg.)* Elmārs.

Rēzija. Rēzija.

Elmārs. *(Quietly.)* Pleased to meet you. *(Pause. Brings himself to speak.)* Could you...

Rēzija. I don't like doing what I'm told.

Elmārs. *(Trying to be calm.)* I'm not telling you anything! I'm thinking...I just wanted to try out this exercise, a game where I say a word, and you say the first thing that pops into your head. You know, to get into the mood...Alright? Then we'll switch, and you'll get to say the words.

Rēzija is silent. Elmārs looks at Rēzija, but when she looks at him, he looks away. Rēzija is silent. Elmārs is nervously shaking his leg.

Elmārs. Sun?

Rēzija. Flash.

Elmārs. Water?

Rēzija. Tears.

Elmārs. Stage?

Rēzija. Dance.

Elmārs. Director?

Rēzija. Creator.

Elmārs. *(Smiling.)* Theatre?

Rēzija. Shit.
Elmārs. *(Stops smiling.)* Lies?
Rēzija. Unforgivable.
Elmārs. Death?
Rēzija. Fear.
Elmārs. Fear?
Rēzija. I don't exist. Do you?
Elmārs. *(Confidently.)* I do.
Rēzija. Who are you?
Elmārs. *(Slowly.)* Elmārs.
Rēzija. Are you a name?

Elmārs is silent.

Rēzija. Who are you?
Elmārs. *(Pause.)* Elmārs.
Rēzija. Director?
Elmārs. No, slave.
Rēzija. Theatre?
Elmārs. *(Understands they should continue the game, but with their roles reversed.)*
Game.
Rēzija. Addiction?
Elmārs. Illness.
Rēzija. Butterfly?
Elmārs. Wings.
Rēzija. Caterpillar?
Elmārs. *(Sighs.)* Worm.
Rēzija. Butterfly?
Elmārs. *(Smiles.)* Cliché.
Rēzija. You're primitive.
Elmārs. *(In disbelief.)* I'm primitive?
Rēzija. It wasn't a question.

Pause.

Elmārs. What's your favorite food?
Rēzija. Mushroom schnitzel. What's your goal?
Elmārs. *(Confused.)* What, right now?
Rēzija. Right now.
Elmārs. *(Silent for a while.)* To see... To see...To see your true self.
Rēzija. I don't exist.
Elmārs. Yes. Maybe.
Rēzija. You want to see yourself.

Elmārs. Yes. Yes... *(Smiling.)* Maybe.

Rēzija. Look in the mirror!

Elmārs is confused.

Rēzija. I'm the mirror. Look in the mirror! You see yourself in me.

Elmārs. No.

Rēzija. You create me. You're the director. You create me.

Elmārs. But I'm not you! It's not me!

Rēzija. You do have some idea about Rēzija Kalniņa, don't you?

Elmārs Well, yes.

Rēzija. There you go! It's not me that you see, but your idea of me. That's how you confine me. And a reduction of another's self to a mere idea happens to be a sign of violent behavior. Because you ignore me, you only see your idea of me, therefore you only see yourself in me!

Elmārs. No.

Rēzija. What's your idea of Rēzija Kalniņa?

Elmārs. She is...Impulsive, arrogant, quick-tempered, ambitious.

Rēzija. Your feminine side is impulsive, arrogant, quick-tempered, ambitious. That's your anima! The yin-yang principle.

Elmārs. Well, okay.

Rēzija. Well, okay, then what do you want from me?

Elmārs is silent. After a while he inhales in order to say something, but Rēzija interrupts him.

Rēzija. There once was a little girl who lived in this world. She lived even when she wasn't yet aware she was alive, when she was only a small baby. She became aware of herself the minute she saw her mother's face. If her mother looked at her and smiled, the girl was happy. If her mother looked at her and cried, the girl was unhappy. If her mother left the room, the girl ceased to exist. She thought that, without her mother, she simply wasn't there anymore. Because she was her mother. And her mother was she. And then one day her mother went away – to wherever it was she had to go. And the girl was left all alone. For a long time. She screamed and cried, because at least then she could hear herself. And then, when the girl thought that she'd been crying forever, no matter how much time had actually gone by in this world, she decided never to look her mother in the face, so as not to suffer so much if she were ever abandoned again. When her mother had gone away again – to wherever it was she had to go – the girl decided she would be a bed, because a bed couldn't go away. Then she decided she would be a chair, a blanked, a doll that was put next to her. Gradually the girl learned to be everything and nothing, anybody and nobody. The only thing she avoided was her reflection. Not just in mirrors, but in teaspoons, forks, lamps, light bulbs,

windows, other people's eyes, puddles, polished doorknobs, keys. It was around that time her mother became afraid of her. Because the little girl wouldn't look into her mother's eyes, she would sit like a chair, lie motionless like a blanket, crawl like a spider and never, never look into her mother's eyes. And her mother started to avoid her. Maybe she was afraid of the girl's way of looking – or not looking – at the world. Have you ever tried avoiding your own reflection? It's all in the edges! You should try it sometime! *(Pause.)* Everything begins with a change of perspective. What you see always depends on how you see it. Juris Rubenis. Anyway. One day, when her mother had gone wherever she had to go, the girl decided to become her mother. Because she could! She was everything and nothing at the same time. A human child with no face! The girl sneaked into her mother's room... because she wasn't supposed to go in there. She secretly took her mother's fancy dress shoes. She took her mother's stockings, which could only be bought under the counter and which she was absolutely forbidden to touch. She took her mother's perfume and then used a broom to get the lipstick down from the dressing table. She used the broom so she wouldn't accidentally see her reflection. Then she put on the lipstick – where she thought her lips were. She sprayed herself with her mother's perfume and put on her mother's stockings. And she tore them just a little bit. Just then her mother came in and saw herself in her little girl. She saw the future that would steal her away. And, what's more, she saw the torn stockings. She grabbed the girl by the arm and dragged her into a room which the little girl had never known about. Her mother opened the door, pushed the girl inside and then turned on the lights. The girl froze, because the room was full of mirrors. A slowly turning mirrorball hung from the ceiling and the floor was scattered with polished spoons. The girl saw a million reflections of herself, and her mother whispered: “You are you. This is you. Self-sufficient.” Then she slammed the door shut. From that day on the girl didn't avoid her reflection anymore. And all those who look into her eyes see their darkest, innermost thoughts.

Pause.

Elmārs. That's a sad story.

Rēzija. I don't tell stories.

Elmārs is silent.

Rēzija. And what's so sad about it? The girl carried on being everything and nothing, anybody and nobody, only now she knew her own face. That's a good thing, isn't it? She became self-sufficient. That's a good thing! The girl became independent. Free! Her mother's campaign was wholly positive!

Pause.

Elmārs. Are we allowed to smoke in here?

Rēzija. In the chamber hall?

Elmārs. Yes.

Rēzija. The director can do anything.

Elmārs. *(Lights a cigarette. Pause. Quickly gets up, goes to his computer.)* I'll put on some music.

Elmārs pauses for a bit, then puts on Arvo Pärt's "Spiegel im spiegel".

Rēzija. Arvo Pärt!

Elmārs. Yes. I like it a lot.

Rēzija. Perhaps you know what it's called?

Elmārs. Yes, "Spiegel im spiegel". It reminded me of your story.

Rēzija. How old are you?

Elmārs. 28.

Pause.

Rēzija. Why won't you leave?

Elmārs. *(Takes an interview from the binder. Reads it.)* An interview from 1994. Quoting Rēzija Kalniņa: "They say the only people left in the theatre are those who can't fight – women, children, the elderly and the sick. That's not true – the ones left are those who haven't reached the end of the line yet, who are a bit naïve and hope that there's still a Sleeping Beauty out there who needs waking up."

Pause. Rēzija is standing by the table and arranging her things on it, as if putting together a puzzle – mobile phone, cigarettes, a box of candy, vitamin pills, a bottle of water, lighter. She strikes a pose, becoming the "Girl".

Rēzija. *(To Elmārs.)* Hey!

Elmārs. Hey.

Rēzija. Listen, why don't you tell me what you have in mind, and then I'll tell you what I want, alright?

Elmārs. Alright.

Rēzija. I have a few ideas.

Elmārs. Alright then. Well, I want to make a show about Rēzija. And I can tell you what I don't want – I don't want to tell your life story.

Rēzija. What do you want then?

Elmārs. I want to find out more...about your various selves.

Rēzija. OK.

Elmārs. See... *(Shows her the interview binder.)* I have a whole bunch of interviews you've given, and I thought they might be useful for the performance.

Rēzija. No, that doesn't work for me. You know what I think? Here's how I see it. Listen. I love clowning around. I love it. You know, just clowning around. And here's how I see it. I mean, if it's going to be here, in the chamber hall. On their way there, people would see all the parts I've played – you know, pictures, cardboard cutouts. Life-size, like those cardboard cutouts of Robert Pattinson from “Twilight”. And people are passing by, and there's all these characters, and they have black mourning ribbons tied around them.

Elmārs. *(Pause.)* Is that really...a good idea?

Rēzija. Oh, so we're suddenly categorizing things as good or evil?

Elmārs. I'm just trying to understand.

Rēzija. You don't have to, just listen. So, there are all these characters I've played – Baibiņa, Yvonne, Penelope, Elizabeth. And they have these black ribbons tied around them, right up to the entrance. As for the hall, I don't know yet, but...I was thinking – there I am...and there's this big white picture frame, and I'm standing behind it. Naked.

Elmārs. Why?

Rēzija. What do you mean, why? Because...And then we have to think of a way to get her, Rēzija, back into character. As if she were an object. We have to dress her up like a paper doll.

Elmārs. Alright. Ok. No, no, no, it's okay! We'll think about it.

Rēzija. The important thing is...It doesn't matter what kind of a person I am! Nobody cares. What does matter is that she, meaning me, that she is herself. And then there are all her characters. And then we put Rēzija's roles on her, I mean, on me.

Elmārs. Isn't it a bit cliché? The frame, I mean, not that it's bad, but...

Rēzija. You can make a picture frame that's cliché...or not cliché.

Elmārs. Alright, alright.

Rēzija. Yes. And then we need...We need three types of light – white, black and red. White lace, black lace. White – for me as a bride. Forever waiting. The bride of the perfect part. She keeps waiting for this perfect part. The red light is for my passion, for my connection with all my characters. For the way I live my life. And black is for the dark side of it, for the widow of all these dead characters. And it's like all these lights are devouring me, trying to tear me apart, and I'm in the middle of it all. It's a metaphor.

Elmārs. *(Pause.)* U-huh. Great! The main thing is, you're getting involved in the process, that's great. It really is. It's great! But how about we try... Let's just agree not to rush things, okay? First, let's get to know each other a little bit.

Elmārs proposes several acting exercises to Rēzija, some of which she agrees to perform. Elmārs tells Rēzija to concentrate on specific points, to grow from a seed into a flower, to steal a cigarette...

Elmārs. So then, what's your favorite food?

Rēzija. I like mushroom schnitzel.

Elmārs. Oh! Great, great. Now, I want you tell me the recipe for mushroom schnitzel – do it in a neutral tone, while also laughing and crying simultaneously.

Rēzija. What?

Elmārs. Okay, then tell it in a neutral tone.

Rēzija tells him the recipe, and Elmārs occasionally corrects her – to ensure that is neutral enough.

Elmārs. Okay! Very good. Now, laugh and cry at the same time!

Rēzija. While using a neutral tone?!

Elmārs. Yes.

Rēzija. *(Tries to perform the exercise, then stops.)* I don't get it. Show me how it's done.

Elmārs. Me?

Rēzija. Yes.

Elmārs. But I'm not an actor! I can't do it.

Rēzija. Of course, because it can't be done!

Elmārs. No, it can, it's just that I can't do it. You can!

Rēzija. No, I can't, because I don't get it!

Elmārs. Well, just talk, laugh and cry!

Rēzija. *(Tries to perform the exercise, almost starts crying, then stops.)* I don't want to cry.

Elmārs. Well, then...

Rēzija. I don't want to cry. I don't want to do what I'm told if I don't like it. I want this to be fair. For example, if you get 2% of the income for directing, we split it in two – one percent for me, one for you. If you tell me to do something, I want you to show me first. Also, we'll take a break anytime I feel like it. And, when I'm happy, you won't make me pretend I'm unhappy.

Elmārs. U-huh...

Rēzija. And always wear nice clothes when you come to the rehearsal. And...if I get sick of it, I'll tell you it's over.

Elmārs. What do you mean – over? And what if I get sick of it?

Rēzija. Then leave!

Pause. Elmārs is silent.

Rēzija. And now we'll take a break!

Rēzija goes to the far side of the hall.

Rēzija. I want to leave! I've been meaning to leave for several seasons now. I'm tired. I don't see the point anymore, I don't know what theatre is or what it should be like, so it would make sense to me again. *(Pause.)* And then Džilis calls me into his office. He sits there, telling me there's this promising young director named

Elmārs... And his dream is to work with me. I ask him about the material. Džilis says there is no material. He just wants to work with me. I think – great, just when I wanted to quit... And then my maternal instinct kicks in again. If someone needs something from me, if someone wants something, then I can't let them down because then they might be disappointed. And I'm also curious – if there's no material, what are we going to do?

15 minutes until rehearsal time, 10 minutes until rehearsal time, 5 minutes until rehearsal time, 10 minutes past rehearsal time, I'm starting to hope he won't show up. And then the so-called young and promising director comes in. Bright. Smiling. Naive. A bit nervous. Like...a hero from a fairytale – the Simpleton.

Rēzija strikes a pose, becoming “Devastated Rēzija”.

Elmārs. Hello!

Rēzija. Hello!

Elmārs. How's your day?

Rēzija. What?

Elmārs. You look kind of sad.

Rēzija. I'm not.

Elmārs. It's been a crazy week. Full moon's coming. Does it affect you?

Rēzija. Yes.

Elmārs. *(Pause.)* It's flu season.

Rēzija. You should take vitamin pills.

Elmārs. *(Reassesses Rēzija's mood.)* Everything alright?

Rēzija. Yes, everything's alright. Everything's fine...

Elmārs. Did something happen?

Rēzija. No. I'm fine. Let's get to work.

Elmārs. Are you sure nothing happened?

Rēzija. Nothing happened.

Elmārs. *(Searches his bag for a notebook and pen.)* Oh, by the way. *(Rummaging around in his bag.)* While I'm searching for my stuff, I want to tell you something. I rode here on my bike. I ride my bike everywhere, because I can't afford to buy a car. *(Laughs. Looks at Rēzija.)* And, imagine this, there I am, on Pulkveža Brieža Street, you know, near “Dinaz”, when suddenly my chain broke.

Pause. Elmārs looks at Rēzija, who is not paying attention.

Elmārs. I mean – my bike chain broke! Not just falls off, but breaks! And I'm halfway there. I was so angry! If I pushed it back home, I'd definitely miss the rehearsal, and then I thought – I can't do that, I'll push it all the way to the theatre! And it's so hot, and I don't know why, but I have a scarf around my neck and a laptop in my bag. And I'm so hot, and I have to figure out how to get back home... *(Pause.)* Why am I telling you this? *(Smiles.)* I wanted to tell you not because the chain

broke, but because I was late! And it's not even my bike!

Pause. A very long pause.

Elmārs. *(Collects himself.)* Here's what we'll do. Usually when I meet actors, we start by getting to know each other. By doing an exercise. Okay. I'll start a sentence and you finish it. I'll start. I like...

Rēzija. I don't know what you like...Oh, I have to finish it. Alright. Mushroom schnitzel.

Elmārs. I love...

Rēzija. To be left alone.

Elmārs. I hate...

Rēzija. Being touched.

Elmārs. I'd never...

Rēzija. Want to die on stage.

Elmārs. I'm unhappy, because...

Rēzija. People won't leave me alone.

Elmārs. I want to be happy, because...

Rēzija. I want to be happy.

Elmārs. I can't be happy, because...

Rēzija. People won't leave me alone.

Elmārs. I'm happy, because...

Rēzija is silent. Pause. No, a real pause.

Elmārs. Alright. Now it's your turn to ask.

Rēzija. What do you want from me?

Elmārs. I want to know what you're actually like! I mean, really. Because people are saying that you're...You're...overbearing. That you're a theatre diva, that you're the one in charge, that you stop at nothing, that you're...prepared to do some pretty crazy things. But it's more likely that you're very fragile, rational, sensitive and unappreciated... I want to find out what you're actually like, and then we'll drag it out in the open! And people won't have any more misconceptions about you.

Rēzija. I don't understand.

Elmārs. Sorry, I got a bit muddled. In truth, you're... IN TRUTH! Because, in truth, you're somebody you're actually not, and when we find that truth, it might actually be easier, because we'll find out what you're actually like.

Rēzija. No idea can express the Truth. You'd better get used to ignorance. Eckhart Tolle. Just saying.

Elmārs. *(Sighs hopelessly.)* Yes, maybe. *(Pause.)* Okay. Do you have a part you've always wanted to play?

Rēzija. Yes... Hamlet.

Elmārs. See, you smiled! You smiled just now! I saw you smile, I like it when you smile. It suits you. That's what I want – joy! Joy, joy, joy, joy, joy!

Rēzija. To sleep, to die and perhaps – to dream in your sleep...

Silence. Elmārs thinks for a while, then gets up, goes to Rēzija, holds out his hands.

Elmārs. Do you know this game?

Rēzija. Oh, you're married.

Elmārs. Yes. Now I'll try to slap your hands, while you try to pull them away.

Rēzija. Alright.

They both play the game, Elmārs slaps Rēzija's hands.

Rēzija. Ouch!

Elmārs. *(Jumps back, startled.)* Oh! Sorry.

Rēzija. It's alright. I always lose anyway.

Elmārs. Your turn.

They both play the game, Rēzija slaps Elmārs' hands.

Elmārs. You win.

Rēzija. You lost on purpose.

Elmārs. No.

They both play the game, Rēzija slaps Elmārs' hands again.

Elmārs. Two to one.

Rēzija. You're losing on purpose! Your hands are asleep.

Elmārs. No.

Rēzija. Yes. I don't want to do it like this, I won't play. I don't need your pity. *(Rēzija crosses her arms on her chest so she would not have to play anymore.)*

Elmārs. *(Is silent for a while.)* Would you feel better if I left?

Rēzija. Why won't you leave?

Elmārs. Why do you keep answering me with questions? Do you like to suffer?

Rēzija. I'm not suffering.

Elmārs. Yes, you are. Don't you see it? Look in the mirror!

Rēzija. I sense some aggression in you.

Elmārs. What do you sense?

Rēzija. I sense some sort of aggressive energy in you.

Elmārs. Oh, so now you sense energies too!

Rēzija. Yes, I feel you could crush me like an insect.

Elmārs. Oh!

Rēzija. You don't get it. How old are you?

Elmārs is silent. He starts gathering up his things.

Elmārs. This is what you wanted, isn't it? To make me leave! You don't want us to have a normal dialogue.

Rēzija. About my favorite food?

Elmārs. Answer me, did you want to make me leave? You wanted to get an aggressive reaction from me?

Rēzija. Not intentionally, no.

Elmārs. If it was unintentional, there was some intention in it.

Rēzija. Oh...So you're one of those people who oppress others, aren't you? You're one of those...

Elmārs. I'm what? One of what? And don't answer me with another question.

Rēzija. You came to destroy me.

Elmārs. Oh! Great, great. Can you be more specific?

Rēzija. *(Sees a tiny insect on the floor, points it out to Elmārs and starts telling a story.)*

Once there was an insect that crawled into the big man's personal space, his comfort zone. A tiny insect, not a beetle, nor a spider, nor centipede, nor ladybug. Just a tiny insect of indeterminate species. And the big man sat in his chair, looking at the insect, unable to take his eyes off it. The man was fascinated and intrigued by the insect, yet it also made him jerk his legs up in panic, wrap his arms around his knees and stay perfectly still – it gave him the urge to kill. The insect didn't want to attack the man, nor did it want to destroy him, it just wanted to pass him by on its way home. So the insect crawled on, purposefully heading for the big man's chair.

Then the people around the man and the insect started crying and screeching. “Die, die!” the people screamed, and one by one they tore off its little wings, its horns and its legs. All these people thought it their duty to protect the big man from the disgusting little insect, because they couldn't believe it was crawling toward the big man with no ill will. They couldn't believe the tiny insect would want to find shelter and warmth in the company of the big man. That just couldn't be!

Having finally reached the leg of the chair, the tiny insect was so battered and torn it couldn't move anymore. The insect didn't move, but it continued to exist! A sympathetic old woman gave the big man a paper napkin, so he could crush the tiny insect without getting his hands dirty. He could wash his hands of the crime, because he wouldn't have been directly involved in the murder. So the big man took the napkin and picked up the insect, holding it between two fingers. Just then he thought he heard a voice from afar, saying: “If you want to test your courage, then ask yourself if you're ready to sacrifice the comfort ensured by your cowardice in order to find out the truth.” Squish! Then all was silent, and what remained of the insect had been destroyed. The people were at peace – until they understood that the idea of the insect persisted in their minds. Because it's ugly to kill someone for no reason. Ugly to kill someone who's powerless and without hope...Isn't it? But why should we talk about powerlessness, when even the

smallest insect in the world can awaken the urge to kill in people, countless people at that. A tremendous power, don't you think? To awaken instincts. Do you understand?

Elmārs. Do you awaken instincts in other people?

Rēzija. Like I did in you? Yes.

Elmārs. Do you like it?

Rēzija. I don't care.

Elmārs. You don't think it's a problem?

Rēzija. No, why would I think it's a problem if it's your problem?

Elmārs. *(Laughs. Jokingly.)* You're sick.

Rēzija. Yes.

Elmārs. Are you taking anything?

Rēzija. What?

Elmārs. Medication!

Rēzija. Antidepressants?

Elmārs. Yes.

Rēzija. No.

Elmārs. Maybe you should.

Rēzija. Yes, I'm dying, we're all dying. *(Pause.)* Why haven't you left yet?

Elmārs. Because the fairytale hero has to ride up the mountain three times.

Elmārs opens a file on his laptop, starts reading it.

Elmārs. 03.10.2012. No way out. No, I don't want to give up. She tears down everything, takes away all my weapons. Okay. I can't give up. Can't I? I can. What will I gain from it? Hmmm. Think about the audience. What will they gain from it? Lies, nothing but fiction. Theirs and ours. Maybe I should read this to the audience. No, that's sick, perverse, gloating over being a loser. Anger. I can't do it. It's going around in circles. Pathetic? Who knows. I wanted to type a swearword, but didn't. The battery is almost dead. So, about Rēzija. I need to find out what I actually need from her. Actually, it's all so vague, fuck. Everything. What is truth? Nothing. Nothing works for me. Nothing.

08.10.2012. I get frightened thinking about who I am. Frightened? Why? Don't know, I don't want to, no, I want to think about it. Tricky trickery. The more I believe, the less I believe. I've lost my bearings. I've given up, there's nothing left. Nobody left to fight with, nothing left to fight for. Elmārs, what is my goal? Silence, enjoy the silence. Enjoy it while it lasts. Peace. Bullshit. What do I need to find? Real, something real. I'm starting to annoy myself. Just like a woman. Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah! I can't concentrate. Okay, think... No provocation, no exercises, nothing. Nothing.

13.10.2012. Not much time left. What should I ask? I don't want to ask anything, why? I've given up. So unprofessional. Panic. I'm sitting here, thinking... I can't think of anything. To let go is to give up. Imagine Kēsteris sitting there, what's he

thinking? The air is full of questions, but I feel like my hands have been cut off.
Rēzija? But how... why? That's it, I hate writing. I choose silence.

Rēzija. You know why you didn't leave? Because you have the soul of an albino!

Elmārs. Can you talk like normal people do?

Rēzija. You have the soul of an albino. That's why you're like this... You should be trying to kill me, destroy me, blow me up in front of everybody, but you have the soul of an albino. That's why you're struggling with yourself right now. You're not comfortable. You're fighting your aggressive side, because you're shocked by it.

Elmārs. No, I'm not struggling with myself, I'm struggling with you.

Rēzija. But you should try not to! We struggle, but all the important things happen when we don't. And you know, it's easier that way! Just try it! Because, if you try to put up a fight, I'll punch you in the mouth. Your face will be black and blue, and you'll have a broken rib. We fight for our comfort, and I'm driving you into complete discomfort, but you can't even imagine that you could accept the way you feel.

Elmārs. Rēzija, I honestly don't understand anymore. I don't understand anything. I don't even understand what I don't understand.

Rēzija. How old are you?

Elmārs. *(Does not answer; turns to his laptop, puts on some music.)* I won't talk to you anymore. I'll listen to some music. I've shut myself off.

Rēzija. You're a diva! Shutting yourself off is your weakness.

Elmārs. *(Puts down his laptop.)* Listen. I'll give you a task. No, I'll give you three tasks!

Rēzija. Why?

Elmārs. Why? Why? Because I'm the director.

Rēzija. The creator?

Elmārs. The slave. So. First, take a sheet of paper and a pencil and write down everything that comes into your head. No censure. Try to capture the flow of your thoughts on paper. Purge yourself. Second and third – don't answer my questions with more questions and try to speak more plainly – so I would understand, so everybody would understand, because it seems nobody understands you now.

Rēzija. So?

Elmārs. Okay, great. That's it, do your task.

Both of them are silent. Rēzija takes the sheet of paper from Elmārs.

Rēzija. On October 17th, 2012, shortly before two o'clock I accomplished the task given to me by the director. *(Reads from the page.)* Inner peace, returning to my teens, freedom, finally – maybe. Elmārs defines me, I come into being, I begin to exist, game, provocation, rhetoric. Many weapons, that's the truth, many questions, don't need answers, because the answer is already in the question. Beautiful goodbyes, a stance becomes clear, I'm a monster, I stop at nothing. Damn... Fun, fun, fun. Joy, joy, joy. Irresponsible of my fears. I should ask for a pension from

all the people who annoy me. Including Elmārs. Damn... I'm starting to realize I'm annoying. Pity creeps in, I don't like it, I don't want to save anyone. Rudzītis... Why is he in my thoughts? The theatre – a hospital with patients that want to be cured. I want it, too. I hear this one thing in my head, over and over – release yourself, release yourself. From what? I feel like Max, I want my Moritz... I have to find a song – the tiny bug that floats and floats and never ever sinks. That could be a second title. Hah! I remember all the pranksters – Emil, Hamlet, Max and Moritz... I'll dye my hair blue and pierce my nose, and they'll think the old lady has finally gone bonkers... Or maybe I should become the fragile little female? Hah! Not today. I enjoy my happiness like Emil does, saying “hah” all the time! All I need is a shotgun and a cap. Hah! I won't write anymore. Hah! Have to buy some yogurt and milk. I want to go home. I'm starting to enjoy life! Success. There's a stick in the anthill.

Rēzija strikes a pose, becoming the “Fisherman – Prankster”.

Rēzija. Why don't we have a *youtube* party now? I'll put on my favorite songs for you.

Rēzija puts on music, sings along. Then Elmārs puts on his favorite songs, then Rēzija puts on hers until she gets bored of it.

Rēzija. Let's go fishing!

Elmārs. Excuse me?

Rēzija. Put on “Sound of nature” - the one with flowing water.

Elmārs puts on nature sounds on youtube.com.

Rēzija. Let's go fishing. To Lake Inesis. There's perches and roaches, and breams. There's also eels and pikes. Can you fish?

Elmārs. No.

Rēzija. You've never been fishing before? Come on. Why?

Elmārs. I once came along, but nobody caught anything on the big hooks.

Rēzija. And then you became an unlucky charm.

Elmārs. Yes.

Rēzija. No, you became a fish angel. A guardian angel for fish! Hah-hah!

Elmārs. Hah-hah.

Rēzija. Alright. This is a boat. We're going fishing now. Oh, come ride in my boat!

Elmārs hesitates, then climbs into...No, steps onto Rēzija's boat. Elmārs steps onto Rēzija's boat.

Rēzija. Careful!

Elmārs. Yes, yes. Alright.

Rēzija. Let's go fishing!

Elmārs. Where where are we?

Rēzija. Lake Inesis. In Vecpiebalga. By the way, there are seven islands on the lake. Here, I'll sit on this bench and you sit on that one. Here are the oars. Now it's your turn to row! *(Laughs.)*

Elmārs. Where to?

Rēzija. *(Points.)* Over there. But be careful. The boat's a bit rickety.

Elmārs. Why isn't it steady?

Rēzija. A wooden boat is never really steady. *(Pause.)* Come on!

Elmārs starts rowing, at first the boat rocks in place, then slowly finds its course.

Rēzija. Alright. Now we have to row all the way to those reeds. Row! You row now! And I'll sing. Do you know this song – “The tiny bug that floats and floats and never ever sinks”? Huh?

Rēzija sings, Elmārs shakes his head.

Rēzija. You don't know it? Didn't they teach you to sing when you were a kid?

Elmārs. No. Nobody ever taught me anything.

Rēzija. We're here! See, there are the reeds. But don't rock the boat!

Elmārs. I'm not rocking the boat.

Pause.

Rēzija. So. Do you know what kind of fishing rod we have?

Pause. A slightly longer one.

Rēzija. We've cut down an elm branch, stripped off the bark and now we have a nice little fishing rod, all white. With a rope. Now, what kind of float do we have?

Elmārs. I don't know.

Rēzija. What's wrong, can't you see our float? It's red on top, with a white bottom. Here's the hook, and here's the weight. You have to adjust the weight according to depth. And there's our can of worms. It's a can of “Rīgas Lāse” candy, and it has worms in it. The lid has many holes, so the worms get to breathe a bit before they die.

They both start sniffing the air like worms in a can.

Rēzija. See that fat one over there? Take it!

Elmārs unwillingly takes the worm from the can and looks at it, wincing.

Rēzija. Now cut it in half.

Elmārs. What?

Rēzija. You have to cut it in half because it's too big for that tiny hook!

Elmārs. I don't know how.

Rēzija. It's really simple, like squishing a little bug – pinch! – and it's done.

Elmārs. Pinch!

Rēzija. Now you put the other half back in the can.

Elmārs. Plop!

Rēzija. Now put the worm on the hook!

Elmārs. Snip!

Rēzija. Now spit on it three times – like a witch. For good luck!

Elmārs. Ptooei, ptooei, ptooei!

Rēzija. Now I'll cast it.

Elmārs. Why won't you let me do it?

Rēzija. Because I like to cast. You row. This is my rod and my fish.

Rēzija casts the line, commenting on her every movement – “I swing back, I sway it, I cast it, duck! Plunk, there goes the float.” Elmārs fidgets.

Elmārs. Now what?

Rēzija. Now we look at the float. When it starts...jerking nervously, that means the fish has caught on – hook, line and sinker.

Elmārs. Why so ambiguous?

Rēzija. What? *(Pause.)* When the float disappears under water, you have to pull it in quick, so the hook catches the lip. *(Pause.)* I'm glad we came, aren't you?

Elmārs. Yes.

Rēzija. What's your favorite food?

Elmārs. Fried potatoes.

Rēzija. How...

Elmārs. Primitive?

Rēzija. I meant to say manly.

Elmārs. Oh... Thank you!

Rēzija. Yes... And primitive is natural. That's good. Infantile – that's bad. Guess what I brought along!

Elmārs. What?

Rēzija. Fried potatoes!

Rēzija installs her fishing rod between her knees and takes a few towel-wrapped jars from her bag. They are filled with fried potatoes with garlic, bacon and dill. The food smells good. There is also a jar of sour cream. She hands it all to Elmārs.

Rēzija. Bon appetit!

Elmārs. Can I eat right now?

Rēzija looks at Elmārs.

Elmārs. I mean, will the fish mind...

Rēzija. I made you some fried potatoes.

Elmārs eats.

Rēzija. We got one! *Sečoks*! Give me the *sečoks*! We got one, we got one...

Elmārs, his mouth filled with fried potatoes, throws the jars aside and tries understand what a "sečoks" is. Rēzija pulls and laughs out loud, starts reeling in the fish, she stands up, the boat begins to rock.

Rēzija. Got it!

Elmārs. What's a *sečoks*?

Rēzija. The net, the net!

Elmārs, his cheeks still full of potatoes, reaches for the sečoks and, unable to grab it, starts crawling toward it on all fours to keep the boat steady. Rēzija laughs.

Elmārs. Oh God...

Elmārs grabs hold of the sečoks, tries getting the fish into it, leans over too far and almost falls into the water. Rēzija laughs, Elmārs laughs – but in desperation. Elmārs is elbow-deep in water, splashing about, trying to get hold of the fish.

Rēzija. Get that fish, get it!

With a roar of victory, Elmārs pulls the net out of the water and drops it into the boat – now the fish is desperately jumping around on the floor, gasping. Silence.

Rēzija. We have a fish!

Elmārs. A fish!

Rēzija. And now we'll go back home and...

Elmārs. Fry it!

Rēzija. In butter!

Elmārs. In butter!

Rēzija. And then we'll eat it all up!

Silence.

Rēzija. Just think, if we could put all of this on stage...The fishing. We could sit down on

a table, in the chamber hall of the Daile, and just be in a boat, philosophizing about life. No intro, no twist, no tension, no culmination, no resolution.

Elmārs. We couldn't.

Rēzija. Why?

Elmārs. Because it'd be a lie.

Rēzija. You don't believe we're in a boat? You don't believe we caught that fish, you don't believe you were eating the potatoes I fried for you...

Elmārs. No, wait. I did believe there were potatoes.

Rēzija. Then you only believe what you see, not what you don't see?

Elmārs. Yes. No. You see, I don't believe... *(Pause.)* No, I don't believe myself, because I don't believe you! You're lying!

Rēzija. Wait, so you're saying a kid who imagines he's in the jungle, riding on an elephant, is a liar too?

Elmārs. Yes.

Rēzija. Wait, are you primitive or infantile?

Pause.

Elmārs. It's not about that... I just don't believe you. Not a word of it. Nothing. I believe none of it.

Pause.

Rēzija. Wait, are you talking to me?

Elmārs. Yes.

Rēzija. As Elmārs to me, Rēzija? Or as Elmārs Seņkovs to Rēzija Kalniņa?

Elmārs. I, Elmārs Seņkovs, am talking to you, Rēzija. We're not pretending anymore.

Rēzija. I'm sitting here on a table, in the chamber hall, and you're telling me it's all a lie?

Elmārs. It's all a lie. Every move you make is a lie.

Rēzija. *(Pause.)* Alright. I'm going to kill you. I had to say it. You shut me off.

Elmārs. Of course – it was my fault! Do you even know what you're doing?

Rēzija. What do you want from me?

Elmārs. Fuck.

Rēzija. You didn't really have a dream, did you? Just an ambition... You were curious if you'd get hold of me, weren't you? But in a personal sense, you're not really interested! It's interesting until you have to take responsibility! When this little project is over, this professional joke of yours, and, say, I'm feeling really bad. In the middle of the night. I call you, asking for help. Would you come? Would you? You think this whole process was an eye-opener? Have we proved anything? Have you discovered anything? There's a difference between "I need something from you" and "I need you as a person". What I really have, that doesn't live up to your idea of Rēzija, does it?

Elmārs. You don't know who you are. You're just hiding behind polished phrases. You

don't exist. It's all lies, lies, lies. *(Pause.)* You told me you hated lies, but there you are, playing some sort of game.

Rēzija. But you said theatre was a game!

Pause.

Rēzija. Zero – zero.

Elmārs. Zero – zero.

Silence. A long silence.

Elmārs. Could you...

Rēzija. Yes, I could.

Elmārs. *(Smiles.)* What will you do now?

Rēzija. After the rehearsal?

Elmārs. Yes.

Rēzija. I'll go home, put on my pajama pants, my slippers and my little white bathrobe. I have a piece of fried cod in the fridge. I'll lie down on the sofa and just...be – for my own sake. I'll switch on the TV and watch the E!Channel.

Elmārs. And what should I do?

Rēzija. Leave life alone, let it be!

Elmārs is silent.

Elmārs. What's your favorite food?

Rēzija. *(Smiles. Pause.)* Mushroom schnitzel.

Elmārs grins. Goes to the pulpit and slowly, theatrically concludes the performance.

The end.