

# RICHARD'S GUESTS

A PLAY

by

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## CHARACTERS

RICHARD, *an English gentleman in his fifties.*

STEFAN, *a young Pole.*

KRYSTINA, *his sister.*

## SETTING

*A room in RICHARD's large house. A few pieces of antique furniture. Cupboard, table, chairs. An easel. A platform and a folding screen. Some paint brushes in a vase. There's no canvas on the easel and no paintings on the walls, but three or four African masks and other objects of African art. Rugs and other antiques show that the owner of the room is a man of taste and well off.*

## A C T O N E

(RICHARD enters followed by STEFAN and KRYSTINA. STEFAN is carrying a plastic bag).

RICHARD

This is my studio. I might have chosen one of the rooms downstairs, but the light is better here. It's to the north.

STEFAN

The north?

RICHARD

Northern light is better than sunshine. All the windows downstairs are to the south. Have you never been in a studio before?

STEFAN

No.

RICHARD (to KRYSTINA)

And you?

STEFAN

Oh yes, *she* has. As I told you at the exhibition -

RICHARD (to KRYSTINA)

Don't you speak English?

STEFAN

Only a little.

RICHARD

A little?

STEFAN

Yes. - *(Pause)* - We are very interested in the job.

RICHARD

You said so, yes. *(To KRYSTINA)* Your brother said that you've often posed.

STEFAN

Yes, she began when she was a child.

RICHARD *(To KRYSTINA)*

And you would like to pose for me, he said?

STEFAN

Yes.

RICHARD

Does he always speak for you?

STEFAN

Yes.

RICHARD (*to* KRYSTINA)

Tell me why you are interested?

STEFAN

To say it as it is ...

RICHARD

I asked your sister.

STEFAN

We need the money. It's hard to get a job.

(RICHARD *looks at* KRYSTINA).

KRYSTINA

We need the money. It's hard to get a job.

RICHARD

A predictable answer nowadays. - (*To* KRYSTINA, *smiling*)  
Why doesn't he tell the truth? You've never posed, have you?

STEFAN

Yes she has.

(RICHARD *looks at him with a wry, conspiratorial smile*).

Okay, she's not a professional. But I'm sure she'll do well.

RICHARD

Well, posing doesn't demand special knowledge. - (*To* KRYSTINA) But it can be strenuous. You'll get very tired.

STEFAN

It doesn't matter.

RICHARD (*smiling*)

So it's *you* who need the money?

KRYSTINA

*We* need the money.

RICHARD

You told me you're from Poland.

STEFAN

My sister is very beautiful. Don't you think so?

RICHARD

Good looks doesn't always make a good model. -

STEFAN

She is beautiful.

RICHARD (*To KRYSTINA*)

You see, it's not only a question of being able to stand and sit. It makes other demands on you. Do you understand what I'm saying?

STEFAN

Yes.

RICHARD

I asked your sister. Did you understand that there's more to posing than just standing and sitting?

STEFAN

She's ready to learn.

(RICHARD *looks at her*).

KRYSTINA

I'm ready to learn.

RICHARD

It's the old story. Necessity is the mother of invention. - Are you always together with your brother?

STEFAN

She doesn't speak English very well.

RICHARD

Please let her speak for herself. I think that her English is pretty good. - (*To KRYSTINA*) I prefer that you'll be coming alone without your brother.

STEFAN

I'd like to follow her. If you don't mind.

RICHARD

Why?

STEFAN

Her English isn't good.

RICHARD

She's supposed to sit, not to talk.

STEFAN

Yes, I know.

RICHARD

You don't trust me, do you?

STEFAN

Why shouldn't I?

RICHARD

You might have good reasons. You know what I mean?

STEFAN

No.

RICHARD

Your sister is beautiful.

STEFAN

I didn't think of that.

RICHARD (*to* KRYSTINA)

Did you?

STEFAN

No.

RICHARD

I asked your sister. (*To* KRYSTINA) It never entered your head that I might be a dirty old man looking for something more than a model?

KRYSTINA

No.

RICHARD

So you don't think you made a rather rash decision?

STEFAN

No.

RICHARD

Perhaps I'm not a painter. You might have checked up on me.

STEFAN

Checked up?

RICHARD

Looked for information about me.

STEFAN

But when we talked at the exhibition - ...?

RICHARD

You can't trust people, can you? If I were you I would have given it a second thought. I'm afraid I wouldn't have accepted my offer.

STEFAN

You're not a dirty old man.

RICHARD (*to* KRYSTINA)

Are you sure?

STEFAN

Yes.

RICHARD

I asked your sister.

STEFAN

Sorry.

RICHARD (*to* KRYSTINA)

Why don't you answer? Don't tell me you do'nt understand. You couldn't be sure that I wasn't a dirty old man, could you?

KRYSTINA

No.

RICHARD

And even so you decided to come.

KRYSTINA

Yes.

RICHARD (*smiling*)

No you didn't. As a matter of fact it was your brother who made the decision. - Please let your sister answer! - Am I right?

KRYSTINA

Yes. You are right. My brother made the decision.

RICHARD

He took a risk on your behalf.

KRYSTINA

No.

RICHARD  
No?

KRYSTINA  
I feel safe.

RICHARD  
Because he's here?

KRYSTINA  
No. - I think there's nothing to be afraid of.

RICHARD  
And if there were you wouldn't tell me, would you?

KRYSTINA (*with a faint smile*)  
I don't think so.

RICHARD  
You're a shy person, aren't you?

STEFAN  
It doesn't matter. She'll pose anyway.

RICHARD  
Being shy may prevent her from doing her job properly.

KRYSTINA  
I'm not shy. I'm ready to pose.

RICHARD  
In the nude?

(KRYSTINA *doesn't answer.*)

You know what it means? To pose naked?

STEFAN  
Yes. She's ready.

RICHARD  
I asked your sister. Are you willing to pose in the nude?

KRYSTINA  
Yes.

RICHARD  
Why?

KRYSTINA  
We need the money.

RICHARD

There's one good reason. You need the money and since a regular job is nowhere to be found you have to swallow the pill. Well. I don't like to disappoint you, but as a matter of fact I don't feel like saying yes. I don't want to exploit you. Besides - as I said a moment ago, being a model is not only a question of sitting without moving. It's also a question of, well, emanating emotions. - Have you any idea of what I'm trying to explain?

KRYSTINA

I think so.

RICHARD (*smiling*)

You think so - in spite of the fact that you don't know what emanate means.

KRYSTINA

I know the word emotions.

RICHARD

I see. Well, we might put it to the test. On certain conditions of course. - Your brother wanted to attend while you're posing. Do you want him to?

STEFAN

Yes.

RICHARD

I asked your sister. (*To* KRYSTINA) Do you?

KRYSTINA

What do *you* want?

STEFAN

Krystina!

RICHARD

I don't like working with someone watching. On the other hand - I might put up with his presence if you want me to.

STEFAN

She wants me to stay.

RICHARD

Do you?

KRYSTINA

If you don't mind.

RICHARD

Okay. On one condition. When you speak to each other speak in



English, not in Polish. (*To KRYSTINA*) - Well, you know what I pay, we talked about that and you seemed to be content. - Any other questions? - Okay then, let's have a try. One hour, and after that I'll make my decision. - You may sit down. (*He points to the chair on the platform*).

KRYSTINA

Should I ... (*She indicates: take off my clothes?*)

RICHARD

No. Not yet. I want you to feel comfortable. How long have you been in Britain?

STEFAN

A couple of weeks.

RICHARD

Do you never let your sister answer?

STEFAN

Of course I do.

(*KRYSTINA enters the platform and sits down on a chair. RICHARD picks up a sketchbook from a drawer*).

RICHARD

So you are just on a tourist trip?

KRYSTINA

No.

STEFAN (*at the same time*)

Yes. A tourist trip.

(*RICHARD takes a rapid glance at both of them*).

RICHARD

You've run out of money then?

STEFAN

Yes..

(*RICHARD adjusts KRYSTINA's position*).

RICHARD

Is that position convenient?

(*KRYSTINA doesn't answer*).

Do you feel fine?

KRYSTINA

Yes.

RICHARD

You may take off your shoes if you want to.

*(She pushes off her shoes. He begins drawing).*

The model I used to have, she left me last week. She married and moved to another town. Most painters prefer that their models keep quiet, but she always talked to me. She was sort of a story-teller. Sometimes she told odd fairy-tales and sometimes - do you understand?

*(KRYSTINA nods).*

RICHARD

Sometimes she told me about her own life. I wonder if you could do the same?

KRYSTINA

Tell you about my life?

STEFAN

No.

*(RICHARD looks at him).*

You said she shouldn't talk. Only sit.

RICHARD

I've changed my mind. I've got a feeling that your sister's English isn't as bad as you told me. - *(To KRYSTINA)* I liked her stories. Sometimes when they were - how do I put it - especially good I paid double wages. I'll offer you the same. *(To STEFAN)* And you need the money, don't you? *(To KRYSTINA)* Would you mind telling me about your life?

STEFAN

No, not her life.

RICHARD *(to STEFAN)*

If you wanted to stay there was one condition. You have to keep quiet while I'm working. From now on you'd better let your sister answer.

STEFAN

I just wanted to say that she should rather tell a fairy-tale.

RICHARD *(to KRYSTINA)*

You may tell whatever you want to. As long as you make it up

yourself. It's not that I don't respect the Polish folktales, but I prefer the excitement of the spontaneous. A cri de coeur. - Do you understand?

*(She nods. He measures her with a pencil in his hand).*

I'm sure you've got a good imagination.

*(He draws).*

Just go ahead. - Once upon a time.

KRYSTINA

Once upon a time - ... there was a king. The king was very kind and friendly. He lived in a beautiful castle and he - ... he was fond of painting.

RICHARD

A king, fond of painting.

KRYSTINA

Mostly he painted flowers because flowers are beautiful and he loved beauty most of all. But sometimes he also painted animals.

RICHARD

Don't move.

KRYSTINA

He liked animals. Animals are beautiful, he said. Both when they lie still and when they move.

RICHARD

Did he ever paint human beings?

KRYSTINA

Yes, but not very often. When the world outside was ugly and he was near crying then he called for his little daughter. She came and posed. And she was glad to. The king got happy. He did not smile, but she knew that inside himself he could feel a little happiness growing bigger and bigger. And the little girl loved to see that her father was happy.

RICHARD

But one day -

KRYSTINA

One day something odd happened to her. She didn't know how, but suddenly she was changed. She was no longer a little girl. She had turned into -

RICHARD

Into what?

STEFAN

Into a flower.

KRYSTINA

No. Into an animal. A small animal. The animal walked around in the king's garden. And then the king came out from his castle. The animal looked at the king and the king looked at the animal. The king -

RICHARD

Yes?

KRYSTINA

The king -

RICHARD

Got scared?

KRYSTINA

No. He had no reason to be scared.

RICHARD

Wasn't the animal dangerous?

KRYSTINA

No.

RICHARD

What sort of animal was it?

KRYSTINA

You see, the king's daughter hadn't changed her - what do you say? - The way she looked?

RICHARD

Her looks, her appearance.

KRYSTINA

She had only changed inside. So the king couldn't see that she had changed and therefore he wasn't afraid of her. He loved her and she loved him and she wanted him to touch her. But she was afraid that he could see that she had changed.

RICHARD

If she looked like she used to ...

KRYSTINA

Yes, but she wasn't sure. So she leaned her head against his

chest and he lifted his hand and ... -

*(She can't find the word, but her hand indicates what she wants to express: stroke).*

RICHARD

Stroke her brown hair. - *(If the actor's hair is brown. If not replace 'brown' with her colour).*

KRYSTINA

Yes, he stroke her hair and her shoulder and the little girl wondered if he could feel in his fingers that her beating heart was the heart of an animal. She was ready to get up and run away -

RICHARD

But the king hadn't noticed that she was different.

KRYSTINA

No, not yet. She looked at the old king and saw that there was nothing to be afraid of. And so she decided to say nothing and just enjoy his hand stroking her brown hair which she no longer thought of as hair, but as -

RICHARD

Thick, brown fur?

KRYSTINA

Yes. The hand was warm and gentle and the feeling was good both to the king and to the animal. The animal -

*(She quivers).*

RICHARD

Trembled all over.

KRYSTINA

Yes. The little girl had always loved her king father. She was afraid to tell him that she had changed into an animal, but at the same time she also wished that he should know her secret and take part in it. He should know that even if she had become an animal, she still loved him and wanted to show it. And then -

STEFAN

Krystina!

RICHARD

Yes?

KRYSTINA

I can't go on.

RICHARD

Why not? Are you in a loss for words?

KRYSTINA

No.

RICHARD

You don't know what's going to happen to the daughter?

KRYSTINA

Yes. I know that very well.

RICHARD

Go on then.

STEFAN

Stop it, Krystina. Stop it.

RICHARD (*to* STEFAN)

Keep quiet, please. (*To* KRYSTINA) I'd like to know what happened to the animal. The king had gentle eyes and his soft hand was stroking the brown fur - and -

STEFAN

Krystina - ...

RICHARD

I warned you!

STEFAN

Sorry.

RICHARD

Don't let it happen again. - Go on.

KRYSTINA

I'd better not.

RICHARD (*to* KRYSTINA)

Well, if you can't go on with the daughter, tell about the king.

KRYSTINA

The king?

RICHARD

It might be a good idea to elaborate his part.

KRYSTINA

Elaborate?

RICHARD

Develop the character - describe him. What kind of man is he?

KRYSTINA

I'm not able to describe him.

RICHARD

Why not? It's your fairy-tale?

*(KRYSTINA gives STEFAN a short look).*

KRYSTINA

I'm afraid I can't go on.

RICHARD

Let's have a break. You're tired. Stand up. Stretch your legs. Walk around. I'm sure you'll find out how to carry on.

*(He pulls off the paper from the sketchbook and puts it on a table upside-down. She rises).*

RICHARD

You said your sister wasn't good at English. I've met a lot of foreigners. Most of them were below your sister's level. Why did you try to give me a wrong impression?

STEFAN

I didn't. - I don't know.

RICHARD

Why don't you tell the truth? You wanted to protect her, didn't you?

STEFAN

Yes.

RICHARD

From me.

STEFAN

Well -

RICHARD

You told me that you hadn't given it a thought before you came here.

STEFAN

It's true. We hadn't talked about it.

RICHARD

Of course you had. Your sister is young and beautiful. My

motives might be more or less improper. Maybe dangerous.

STEFAN

I think she's ready again.

RICHARD

Are you always protecting your sister?

KRYSTINA

No.

STEFAN (*at the same time*)

Yes.

RICHARD

Let's talk about that later. (*To KRYSTINA*) I'd like to have a new position if you don't mind. If you'll please stand?

*(She rises and places herself in a graceful attitude).*

And take off your sweater, please.

KRYSTINA

My sweater?- Is that all?

RICHARD

Yes, for the present.

*(She takes off her sweater. He looks at her and adjusts her position. It is still graceful).*

RICHARD

I hope that you don't mind.

KRYSTINA

Mind what?

RICHARD

That I'm touching you.

KRYSTINA

No, I don't mind.

RICHARD

Have you thought about the king and his daughter?

KRYSTINA

Yes.

RICHARD

We may go on then? - (*To STEFAN*) And you'll please remem-



ber to keep quiet. - (To KRYSTINA) The king stroked his daughter's hair -

*(His hand strokes over her arm).*

it was as if he stroked the fur and the animal quivered -

*(His hand strokes over her arm once more).*

- but not for fear?

KRYSTINA

No.

RICHARD

Something tells me that you're ready to go on.

KRYSTINA

Yes, I am.

*(He picks up the sketchbook and begins on a fresh drawing).*

But I'd rather tell you a little more about the daughter. She wondered how she so suddenly had become an animal.

RICHARD

May I have a guess? Witchcraft.

KRYSTINA

What's witchcraft?

RICHARD

Black magic. Voodoo. There's always witchcraft in a fairy-tale. Probably there's a terrifying black-hearted witch in your story.

KRYSTINA

Yes. There is a witch. The daughter knew him. Very well indeed. But the king was blind and couldn't see him.

RICHARD

Blind?

KRYSTINA

Not really blind. The king could see him. He saw him every day, but he couldn't see that he was a witch.

*(She looks at STEFAN. RICHARD observes it. She looks away).*

A black-hearted witch. He lived in the castle together with the

King and the daughter. The daughter and the witch were sister and brother.

STEFAN

No.

*(RICHARD raises his hand and shakes his forefinger at him).*

RICHARD *(to KRYSTINA)*

Go on.

KRYSTINA

I can't.

RICHARD

Why not?

*(KRYSTINA shrugs her shoulders).*

I'd like to know why he transformed her into an animal?

KRYSTINA

That's the problem.

RICHARD

And you haven't got the answer?

KRYSTINA

Yes I have.

RICHARD

Go on then.

STEFAN

Krysti...

RICHARD

I told you - ... If you want to stay you'll have to be quiet.

STEFAN

Yes, I know, but that fairy-tale isn't ...

RICHARD

It's her story. If you don't want to listen you may go downstairs and wait. Read the newspaper - if you can.

KRYSTINA

I want him to stay.

RICHARD

You do?

KRYSTINA

Yes.

RICHARD

Why? - You are not afraid of *me*, are you?

KRYSTINA

I never was.

STEFAN

I am.

RICHARD

I couldn't do her any harm. *(To KRYSTINA)* Could I?

KRYSTINA

I don't think so.

RICHARD

But you want him to stay anyway.

KRYSTINA

Yes.

RICHARD

Because you want him to listen to your story?

*(KRYSTINA nods).*

RICHARD

Okay. Let's go on then. I like it. It's very poetic. *(To STEFAN)* So - please keep quiet and listen. *(To KRYSTINA)* Oh, you've changed your position. - It doesn't matter. Relax.

*(He pulls off the drawing from the sketchbook and places it on top of the first drawing upside-down. She's seated).*

Sometimes she told me the most incredible stories. She tried to convince me that they dealt with her own life. I found it hard to believe. She was rather sophisticated.

STEFAN

She also told about her sex-life, didn't she?

RICHARD

Why do you think so?

KRYSTINA

Sorry, he shouldn't have asked.

RICHARD

Why not? - *(To STEFAN)* If I say yes, you'll call me a dirty old pig. If I say no, you'll say I'm lying. As a matter of fact it was neither. She was rather open, but she never went into details. It was more like contemplations about the queer behavior of the human race. She could be very sarcastic, but never porny. - You've got porno in Poland now, haven't you? One of the blisses of western superiority. When I was young sex was never a subject of conversation. That's why it became one of the sweet secrets of life. Nowadays it's the main topic and nothing is left to your imagination. Everything is brought out in the light of day.

KRYSTINA

No. It isn't.

STEFAN

Krystina!

KRYSTINA

I'm ready now.

*(She rises and returns to the graceful attitude which is in no way sexy).*

RICHARD

Could you please take off your blouse?

*(She takes off her blouse. She's now dressed in a black bra, a skirt and black nylons. When she returns to her position the graceful attitude is replaced by an awkward carriage. He adjusts her position. When he moves her arm or her leg his hand rests on her body for a little longer than necessary).*

Are we ready? I think so.

*(He resumes his work at the pad).*

Well, the brother was a witch. And you were going to explain - no, a good fairy-tale never explains. It looks at the secrets under the surface and speaks of them in metaphors. You know what I'm talking about?

KRYSTINA

Yes.

RICHARD

Well, let's go on. I'm anxious to know what happened to your

animal.

KRYSTINA

You are?

RICHARD

You're a good narrator.

KRYSTINA

I'm afraid your old model was better.

RICHARD

She wasn't old.

STEFAN

She was young and sexy and full of dirty stories.

RICHARD

Her life was dirty. Her mind wasn't. (*To KRYSTINA*) I'm all ears. You were going to elaborate on the king's part.

KRYSTINA

I've changed my mind. I'd rather tell you about the daughter.

STEFAN

Don't.

RICHARD

Why?

KRYSTINA

You wanted to know why she turned into an animal. It happened when she was still a child.

RICHARD

Back to her childhood then?

KRYSTINA

Yes. - When she was still a child she often went to a small house in the last end of the royal garden. (*She turns her head*). Is it the *last end*?

RICHARD

Don't move. The farthest end.

KRYSTINA

Thank you. She often went to a small house in the farthest end of the royal garden. She sat in the house and looked out of the little window and listened to the birds. Her brother used to ride a horse outside the garden. But one day he went to see his sister instead.. He opened the door and closed it behind him. He loo-

ked at her. He had seen that she was no longer a little girl. She was on her way to become a little young woman and he had come because he ...

STEFAN

Krystina!

RICHARD

Don't be prudish.

STEFAN

She shouldn't tell a story like that.

RICHARD

Take it easy. I'm also aware of what this may lead to, but it's only a fairy-tale and we're grown-up people, aren't we? Just go on. The brother looked at her -

*(KRYSTINA's looking at STEFAN).*

and said?

*(KRYSTINA looks away from STEFAN).*

KRYSTINA

He said nothing. He sat down beside her and lifted up her little red frock and put his hand on her thigh.

RICHARD

And what did she say?

KRYSTINA

She - she said nothing. And she did nothing. She just let it happen. He put his arm around her. He kissed her on her neck and moved his hand a little longer up under the red frock. He kissed her on her cheek. And on her lips. Her very first kiss. She would never forget it. And his hand on her thigh -

RICHARD

Kept moving.

KRYSTINA

And moving and he kissed her again. And her lips parted. She - she -

RICHARD

Wanted to scream?

*(KRYSTINA is silent).*

No, she didn't. She hated him? - She was angry? - Furious?

(KRYSTINA *is silent. She closes her eyes.*)

No she wasn't.

KRYSTINA

She felt his tongue between her lips. His hand between her legs. And all the time she wondered why she let this happen.

STEFAN

Stop it.

RICHARD

Shut up.

KRYSTINA

His hand crept into her panties and stroke her little brown fur. And suddenly she stopped wondering why she let it happen. His hand crept deeper and she felt that he wanted her legs to come apart. She didn't know why she couldn't resist, but she did as he wanted and his hand crept further down and she felt his finger - go in where nobody had touched her before.

STEFAN

Stop it, Krystina.

KRYSTINA

He moved his finger up and down and the little girl - felt - something - something she had never felt before - something that was completely different from everything else she had ever felt.

RICHARD

And he kissed her again and she parted her lips.

KRYSTINA

And he took her hand and placed it on the same place on his own body and she felt something hard and she knew that his hand between her legs and his moving finger was only the beginning. He opened his trousers and forced her fingers - her trembling fingers - to get hold of something she had never seen before - something hard and hot. And in that moment she began to change. Something very odd crept into her mind and divided her soul. It crept around in her body and made her change. At that moment she didn't realize that she was turning into an animal. She just knew that she would never be the same. She liked the change and she was afraid of it. It scared her and it attracted her. She wanted to run away from it. And she wanted to stay. Stay and enjoy. She couldn't describe it - she had no words - not at that time - it wasn't until later when she learned ... - but at that time? No. He unbuttoned her little red frock and took off her little knickers and she closed her eyes and he kissed her

again and he moved his tongue in and out - and all the time she held in her small hand -

RICHARD

Yes?

KRYSTINA

Could we have a pause?

RICHARD

Now?

KRYSTINA

Please? - It's difficult to tell a story like this without moving.

RICHARD

Okay, let's have a break. - You may sit down.

KRYSTINA

You haven't finished, have you?

RICHARD

It doesn't matter. These are only rough sketches. Please sit down.

*(He pulls off the drawing from the pad and puts it on top of the other sketches upside-down. She sits).*

STEFAN

Krystina - ...

RICHARD *(smiling)*

In English! Please!

STEFAN

We shouldn't have come.

RICHARD

Nonsense. Just relax, young man. There's no reason to tell a fairy-tale if it doesn't touch some of the unpleasant layers of the soul. Your sister seems to know that. *(To KRYSTINA)* You don't want to stop now, do you?

KRYSTINA

No. I want to go on.

RICHARD

Are you sure?

KRYSTINA

Yes. We need the money.



RICHARD

And you think that this old man would like a filthy story?

KRYSTINA

I don't know what I think.

RICHARD

I've decided to double the pay.

KRYSTINA

Thank you.

RICHARD

What about your brother - ?

*(KRYSTINA gives STEFAN a Mona Lisa smile).*

KRYSTINA

He stays with us.

RICHARD

All right. As long as he doesn't interrupt.

KRYSTINA

He won't interrupt. We need the money, don't we Stefan? - I'm ready now.

RICHARD

It's time for the skirt. If you don't mind.

*(She looks at her brother while she takes off her skirt. She hands it to RICHARD. He puts it on a chair. She is now dressed in black bra, black girdle, small black briefs and black nylons. She turns to him. He points to the chair. She sits down on the edge of the seat. He adjusts her position. He leans her back and puts her right hand on her mount of Venus. He tries various positions of the left hand, but he can't decide which one is the best. He lets go of her hand. She places it over her right breast).*

KRYSTINA

Is this okay?

RICHARD

If it's okay for you?

KRYSTINA

It is.

*(He takes the pad and begins to draw).*

KRYSTINA

You're waiting for more details, aren't you?

RICHARD

It's up to you.

KRYSTINA

What do you expect?

RICHARD

You've done well so far. Just go on in the same way.

KRYSTINA

Have I really done well?

RICHARD

Oh yes. You're just as good as my former model. I think your story has the same quality. Very teasing indeed. So let's go on with your fairy-tale. And don't worry about your language. I ought to compliment you. Your English is very good.

STEFAN

She learned it at university.

RICHARD

She did?

STEFAN

We both did.

RICHARD

I wonder why your brother goes on lying.

STEFAN

I'm not lying.

RICHARD

Yes you are. Your sister may very well have studied at some Polish university, but she has practised her English in this city for a long time. Hasn't she?

*(STEFAN doesn't answer).*

More than two weeks. *(To KRYSTINA)* Haven't you?

STEFAN

No. You see ...

KRYSTINA

Yes, we have.

RICHARD (*to STEFAN*)

No hard feelings, I'm sure you've got your reasons. (*To KRYSTINA*) Let's return to the small cottage and the sieblings' love affair - if we may call it so. He unbuttoned her little red frock and I think that we all know what happened next. If you want to go further into the details it's okay, but I'd rather hear about her divided soul.

KRYSTINA

Her soul?

RICHARD

Yes.

KRYSTINA

At that moment she didn't have a soul. She was completely obsessed with the hard frightening thing - which was not only frightening, it was also fascinating and tempting. Now it was no longer in her hand. She was longing for him to go on - to do - she didn't know what - she just knew that she wanted it to happen - and suddenly a glowing mixture of pain, joy and delight filled her body. She screamed and he looked at her and asked, did I harm you? But she whispered no, no, no. If somebody had asked her what had happened and what went on for the next minutes she wouldn't have been able to tell. - Not at that time. Later she should learn the word for this ... this mixed feeling. The word is lust. When she woke up and opened her eyes she looked into her brothers face and she could'nt see the usual love and tenderness, but only a smile of triumph. And when she looked at herself she saw that she had turned into an animal with brown fur all over her beating heart. At that time she didn't know that this was the result of her brother's witchcraft, she only knew that ...

*(The sound of a telephone makes her stop. She draws herself up).*

Aren't you going to answer it?

*(RICHARD puts the pad on the table and leaves the room. STEFAN rises and walks softly towards the table).*

Stefan!

*(He puts his forefinger on his lips: be quiet. He looks at the drawings and is on the point of speaking to KRYSTINA. Suddenly he listens, puts the papers back on the table and hurries back to his chair. RICHARD returns).*

I'm sorry. I've shifted my position.

RICHARD

You needed a break anyway, didn't you?

KRYSTINA

No.

RICHARD

Aren't you tired?

KRYSTINA

No.

RICHARD

Let's go on, then.

KRYSTINA

Same position?

STEFAN

Does it matter?

RICHARD

What?

KRYSTINA *(at the same time and quickly)*

I could also stand if you want. I'll do whatever you like.

*(RICHARD looks at STEFAN as if he was going to ask him a question. But he doesn't).*

KRYSTINA

I hope you're satisfied with me.

RICHARD

Yes, I am. I never said I wasn't, did I?

KRYSTINA

No.

*(RICHARD adjusts her position. He concentrates on her hips and thighs. He touches her abdomen and her bottom. She ends up in a somewhat vulgar sexy position).*

KRYSTINA

Do you really like this?

RICHARD

I thought it might help you to continue your story.

KRYSTINA

You didn't answer.

RICHARD

Are you asking me questions?

KRYSTINA

Yes.

RICHARD

Well, why shouldn't you.

KRYSTINA

I won't get an answer, will I?

RICHARD

Do you really want one?

KRYSTINA

If you don't mind. Do you actually like this?

RICHARD

I don't know.

STEFAN

He loves it.

RICHARD

Please, stop the ping-pong. I didn't put you in that position because I wanted to slobber over a sexy young girl ... (To STEFAN) If that is what you think.

STEFAN

Yes, you did.

KRYSTINA (to RICHARD)

I know you didn't. You ...

RICHARD (to KRYSTINA)

Please! ... Please sit down.

(KRYSTINA *remains standing*).

STEFAN

I know quite well what ...

KRYSTINA

You know nothing.

RICHARD (to KRYSTINA)

I made a mistake. Sorry. I didn't intend to be offensive.

KRYSTINA

It's me who must apologize. I was rude.

RICHARD

Forget it. Please sit down.

(KRYSTINA *sits*).

You're not in the mood for telling fairy-tales now, are you?

KRYSTINA

If you are still in the mood for listening?

RICHARD

I'm curious to know what happened to her after she got raped.  
So if you have thought of a continuation - ?

STEFAN

It wasn't rape.

KRYSTINA

He's right. It wasn't rape.

(RICHARD *looks inquisitive*).

I wish it were, but I have to tell the truth. The truth is that next day she went to the little cottage again. All the way through the royal garden she could feel her beating heart. She walked slowly to make sure that her brother saw her. She opened the door with a trembling hand, sat down and waited. Her heart was a rumbling fire. She closed her eyes. The flames inside her were more than flesh and blood could stand, but suddenly her brother entered. He closed the door and stood in front of her and gave her a smile like the one he had given her the day before. A smile without tenderness, without love. He knew what she was waiting for. But he didn't touch her. He didn't unbutton her little red frock. Come on, he said and his smile was attracting and disgusting at the same time, and he took her tiny hands and made her open his trousers and she took it out, she didn't know what he was up to, but he made her kiss it and he forced her to open her mouth and ... - You're not drawing?

STEFAN

He has stopped his pantomime. (*To RICHARD*) You know what I mean?

RICHARD

No.

STEFAN

Yes, you do.

RICHARD (*To KRYSTINA*)

She didn't turn away in disgust?

KRYSTINA

No. She was too astonished. She was aware that she was learning.

RICHARD

Didn't she feel abused?

STEFAN

She loved her brother.

RICHARD (*to KRYSTINA*)

Did she?

STEFAN

Yes.

KRYSTINA

She was learning something about men.

RICHARD

And she didn't like it?

KRYSTINA

I'm afraid she did. Next day she went to the cottage again.

RICHARD

And the day after?

KRYSTINA

Every day. For a long time.

RICHARD

What happened?

KRYSTINA

She learned it all.

RICHARD

The mixture of pain and joy and delight.

KRYSTINA

No. Not pain. Not joy. Not love. Nothing but heat.

RICHARD

Then I'm afraid she didn't learn everything. Did she feel guilty?

KRYSTINA

Guilty of what?

RICHARD

Most people would have had a bad conscience.

KRYSTINA

Animals don't have a conscience.

RICHARD

She wasn't an ordinary animal.

KRYSTINA

Conscience is something you've got inside. Inside she was an animal.

RICHARD

And no human feelings left in her beating heart?

STEFAN

Why don't you draw?

RICHARD

We're having a break.

STEFAN

You're wrong. You don't draw because you know nothing about drawing.

KRYSTINA

Stop it, Stefan!

STEFAN

Nothing at all.

RICHARD

Are you an expert?

STEFAN

While you were out I looked at your drawings. You just -

*(He can't find the word, but his hand indicates that RICHARD's drawings are nothing but helpless and incidental scratchings).*

You're a crook.

*(He goes to the table and snatches one of the drawings and shows it to KRYSTINA. She smiles and shrugs her shoulders).*



He's a dirty old pig. He only wanted to look at you. He's an old slobbering swine, can't you see that?

KRYSTINA

He pays well, Stefan.

STEFAN

You're not an artist.

RICHARD

No. - And so what?

KRYSTINA (*to STEFAN*)

Yes, and so what?

(*STEFAN looks at KRYSTINA. She looks at him. He looks away.*)

RICHARD

You might report me to the police?

KRYSTINA

No. I'd like to go on.

RICHARD

Because I pay well?

KRYSTINA

I don't mind if you think that's the reason.

RICHARD

What else? Do you like to be looked at?

KRYSTINA

I don't mind that either.

RICHARD

I see.

KRYSTINA

Besides, we haven't finished our fairy-tale.

RICHARD

Our fairy-tale? When did it become *ours*?

KRYSTINA

Sorry. It didn't.

RICHARD

Thank you.

KRYSTINA

Not yet.

RICHARD

So you have plans?

STEFAN

Krystina, he's a dirty old pig. *(To RICHARD)* We're leaving. - If you'll please pay us now?

KRYSTINA

We're not leaving. I want to go on with the fairy-tale.

RICHARD *(to STEFAN)*

Do you want to ask her why?

KRYSTINA

No, he doesn't.

RICHARD *(to STEFAN)*

Are you sure?

KRYSTINA

Yes. - The posing is over, isn't it?

STEFAN

Of course it is.

RICHARD

Yes. - You'd better dress.

KRYSTINA

It doesn't matter. I feel fine.

*(RICHARD opens a cupboard and takes out a bottle of sherry and three glasses. He pours).*

RICHARD

And you really want to go on?

KRYSTINA

I insist.

RICHARD *(to STEFAN)*

Any objections?

KRYSTINA

No.

RICHARD

Let's drink to a happy ending, then.

*(He hands a glass to KRYSTINA. He also hands a glass to STEFAN, but STEFAN doesn't take it. Richard puts the glass back upon the table.)*

KRYSTINA

In Poland we say, he who lives will see.

*(They drink. STEFAN doesn't).*

RICHARD

We left the daughters childhood and arrived at a riddle. An animal hidden in a young girl or a young girl hiding an animal. What are we going to end up with?

KRYSTINA

I don't know.

STEFAN

A dead painter who can't paint.

RICHARD

Dead? Would you like to kill me?

STEFAN

Yes.

RICHARD *(To KRYSTINA)*

Won't she get rid of that animal?

KRYSTINA

Would you like that?

RICHARD

Is there any other acceptable solution?

KRYSTINA

I don't know if she's able to.

RICHARD

Well, it's your fairy-tale. - Anyway, those meetings in the small cottage couldn't go on forever. So let's have an ending, happy or not.

KRYSTINA

I'm afraid there's one more chapter before the ending.

*(She looks at STEFAN. He shakes his head).*

A black chapter. - *(To RICHARD)* You are right. The meetings in the little cottage didn't go on forever. Meetings? What a funny word and totally wrong. Their bodies met. Their joy and desire

never met. Not even their lust met. Their feelings, if they had any, stayed on two desert islands. Perhaps those meetings might have gone on forever. You know, the flames of lust never die. They blaze up again and again. But one day when the king's daughter and her brother were fucking in the cottage and she was on the point of screaming, the door was opened and the king stood in the doorway. He looked at them, turned around and ran all the way through the garden and disappeared into the castle. The king's daughter looked at her brother. His usual smile was gone. He looked scared. And the animal inside her could feel that the same smile that her brother used to give her was now on her own lips. And the animal said, let's go and see our father, Stefan.

STEFAN

She's mad.

RICHARD

You may be right, but she's a fascinating narrator.

STEFAN

You don't think her story is real, do you?

RICHARD

What do you mean by real?

STEFAN

It's not a story about her and me.

RICHARD

Don't be silly. She's improvising. She's making it up.

STEFAN

That's not what you're thinking.

RICHARD

Don't be ridiculous. It's a fairy-tale. A bit risky, I'll admit that, but very entertaining. (*To KRYSTINA*) I bet that the king's daughter buttoned up her little red frock and went after the king.

KRYSTINA

Yes. She ran through the garden and hurried into the castle. She searched him everywhere, but he was nowhere to be found. At last she went to her own room and sat down on her bed. She waited for many hours. Eventually she heard heavy steps outside the door. Her father entered. His face was red and even if he didn't look at her his eyes scared her. She got to her legs, but he grasped her and hit her. Hard. Once, twice. He ripped her frock off her body and hit her again and again and knocked her over onto the bed. She could smell he was drunk.

STEFAN

Don't listen. It's a sick story.

KRYSTINA

Yes, sick is the word. He was dead-drunk and out of his mind and he raped her. He wanted to punish her and the worst punishment he could think of ... - No, he wasn't thinking -

RICHARD

Probably not.

KRYSTINA

In that moment he too was an animal. Nothing but an animal.

RICHARD

Brute force.

KRYSTINA

Exactly.

RICHARD

And sorrow, perhaps?

KRYSTINA

Sorrow? I don't think so.

RICHARD

Disappointment?

KRYSTINA

Don't defend him. He was dead-drunk. He had lost his mind. He was mad. Nobody could tell what was going on in his head.

RICHARD

I don't think he was mad. As far as I can see he must have been a victim of very mixed feelings.

KRYSTINA

I can't tell.

RICHARD

Why not? You're the narrator.

KRYSTINA

A fairy-tale doesn't explain. Remember? You said it yourself.

STEFAN

Don't listen to her. She's mad.

KRYSTINA

But I can tell you what happened afterwards. When the rape was over he hid his face in his hands and cried. Cried like a baby. She got to her feet and left the room. She went to the little cottage to meet her brother, but he wasn't there. She sat down and closed her eyes. She waited until it got dark and the birds stopped singing. The pain between her legs was nothing compared to the pain in her heart. Her heart? Did she still have a heart? Suddenly she was cold all over. Her beating heart was no longer beating. It had become a stone.

RICHARD

And then?

KRYSTINA

Then nothing.

RICHARD

Was that the black chapter?

KRYSTINA

Yes.

RICHARD

And the end of it?

KRYSTINA

No.

RICHARD

Let's have the ending, then.

STEFAN (*ironic*)

A happy one.

RICHARD (*To KRYSTINA*)

You'll do your best, won't you?

KRYSTINA

I'd like to.

(*RICHARD pours sherry into KRYSTINA's glass and turns towards STEFAN. STEFAN's glass is still on the table.*)

STEFAN

A happy ending to who?

RICHARD

To whom.

(*STEFAN doesn't know how to react to the kind correc-*

*tion. RICHARD gives him a friendly smile and hands him his glass).*

KRYSTINA

To the one who deserves it.

RICHARD

Who is he?

KRYSTINA

Time will show.

RICHARD

Cheers.

*(RICHARD and KRYSTINA drink).*

STEFAN

She can't go on.

KRYSTINA

Sorry, Stefan, the story has to be told. I can't help it.

STEFAN

Don't say that we need the money.

KRYSTINA *(To RICHARD)*

What I've told you so far is a cruel story. Now comes ...

STEFAN *(to RICHARD)*

We're leaving.

KRYSTINA

No, we're not.

STEFAN

We've been here for an hour now. Could we have an hour's pay, please?

KRYSTINA

We are not leaving, Stefan.

STEFAN

I'll go alone then. Without you.

RICHARD

Take it easy, there's no danger. We're just playing a game. *(to KRYSTINA)* Aren't we?

KRYSTINA

Yes, a game.

*(RICHARD lifts his glass and invites STEFAN to do the same, but STEFAN hesitates).*

RICHARD

Cheers.

*(STEFAN hesitates).*

In a little while we'll have a happy ending. *(To KRYSTINA)*  
Won't we?

*(She lifts her glass).*

KRYSTINA

He who lives will see.

RICHARD

Cheerio!

*(They drink. STEFAN empties his glass in disgust).*

Now to the fairy-tale.

STEFAN

Our little game. In which I'm only a - what do you call it?

RICHARD *(smiling, ironic)*

A pawn?

STEFAN

What's a pawn?

RICHARD

A chessman.

*(STEFAN isn't sure that he has understood. He indicates with his hand).*

STEFAN

For playing chess?

RICHARD

Yes.

STEFAN

So - this is a chess game?

RICHARD



Forget it. It's just a phrase, a pawn in a game. Listen to your sister.

STEFAN

What do you call it when you take a chessman and .. ? (*He indicates that he moves a chessman.*)

RICHARD

You make a move.

STEFAN (*to KRYSTINA*)

It's your move. I warn you. Be careful. Don't knock the king over.

RICHARD

As I said a moment ago, there's no danger. She has promised to deliver a happy ending when the black chapter is over. That's what we're waiting for, (*to KRYSTINA*) aren't we?

KRYSTINA

The king's daughter sat in the little cottage, waiting. It got dark outside and the birds stopped singing. She listened to her stony heart, and the stony heart told her that the rape was the end of the story. There was no more. Her life was over. She thought of the pond in the royal garden. The black water. The white waterlilies. Everything forgotten. Nothing to remember. But then - the animal - I don't know how to explain it, but the animal also spoke to her and said, no your life isn't over. Hit back. Never say die, hit back. And in that very moment her brother entered the cottage. He looked at her and saw that something terrible had happened and he asked her and she told him everything. Come on, he said and took her hand. They left the cottage and went through the garden and suddenly they saw their father. He came walking in the moonlight - no, not walking ...

RICHARD

He was still dead-drunk?

KRYSTINA

Yes, and he didn't see them. He went on to the pond. He stopped at the bank and stood swaying from side to side and looked at the black water.

STEFAN

She's mad. If she doesn't stop - ...

*(There's a short interruption. KRYSTINA doesn't go on. She looks at RICHARD. Is she asking for help?)*

RICHARD

Go on.

STEFAN

I mean it.

(RICHARD *looks at* KRYSTINA. *Doesn't she want to go on? To RICHARD*)

Dirty swine.

RICHARD

It's okay. You don't like her story and you may have your reasons. But I don't like your interruptions, I want the story to go on. So if your sister chooses to be silent it's your turn.

STEFAN

My turn?

RICHARD

Yes. The king looked at the black water. And suddenly -

KRYSTINA

Yes. Go on, Stefan.

STEFAN

No!

KRYSTINA

Suddenly -

STEFAN

No!

KRYSTINA

A black cloud came drifting over the sky. It hid the moon and the night became so dark that they couldn't see him. The king's daughter and her brother ran up to the pond ...

STEFAN

But he was no longer on the bank. He had disappeared between the water-lilies and he didn't come out of the water again.

RICHARD

He was drowned?

STEFAN

Yes, and that's the end of the story.

RICHARD (*to* KRYSTINA)

Is it?

STEFAN

Yes it is.

RICHARD

What about the happy ending?

STEFAN

There is no happy ending.

RICHARD

How can you be sure?

STEFAN

It wasn't a fairy-tale.

RICHARD (*to* KRYSTINA)

It wasn't?

STEFAN

You know that very well. It's a mad game and I don't want to be a prawn any longer. You're an old pervert. You're looking at her all the time. You make her walk around half-naked so that you can slobber over her. You made her tell a story which - ... We quit.

RICHARD

Your sister won't follow you.

STEFAN

Of course she will.

RICHARD

No, she won't.

*(STEFAN picks up her skirt and blouse and holds it out. She shakes her head).*

STEFAN

It's your fault.

RICHARD

My fault? Do you really believe that I could prevent her from leaving?

STEFAN

Yes.

RICHARD

Keep her against her will?

STEFAN

That's exactly what you're doing.

RICHARD

Nonsense.

STEFAN

She has no reason to stay.

RICHARD

Why doesn't she walk out, then?

STEFAN

You know why?

RICHARD

No. She may go if she wants to. If you really think that I'm holding her back, go and call the police. The phone is in the next room.

*(Long silence. STEFAN lets go of the clothes and sits down on the platform).*

STEFAN

Okay, we'll stay.

*(RICHARD looks at KRYSTINA).*

KRYSTINA

Yes, we're staying.

STEFAN *(sneering at her)*

We need the money.

KRYSTINA

Yes, we need the money.

STEFAN *(to RICHARD)*

Go on then. Fuck her.

RICHARD

No.

STEFAN

That's why you took us here.

RICHARD

No.

STEFAN

You're lying.

RICHARD

No, I'm not. But I'd like to *listen* to your sister. I hope she's going to continue her fairy-tale. - (To KRYSTINA) The poor king was drowned. What happened next?

KRYSTINA

I don't know.

RICHARD

Yes, you do.

KRYSTINA

Well, what do you think?

RICHARD

I'm not a story-teller.

KRYSTINA

Have a guess.

RICHARD

A guess? Okay. - The two animals went to the daughter's room and were united in their usual way. Next morning they were waked up by the servants' call for help. They had found the dead king in the pond. Everybody thought it was an accident and his death was universally mourned. The king's daughter and her brother went to the funeral hand in hand and everybody felt for them. And that was the end of the black chapter. Am I right?

KRYSTINA

No.

STEFAN (*at the same time*)

Yes.

(RICHARD *looks inquiringly at KRYSTINA*).

STEFAN

The king was buried and there's no more to say about that.

RICHARD (*to KRYSTINA*)

No more? - Well, it's time for the happy ending then. It's your turn now. I can't figure it out.

KRYSTINA

Neither can I.

RICHARD

You promised.

STEFAN

It's quite simple. They sold their father's castle and went out into

the wide world to seek their fortune. They had a dream -

KRYSTINA

No.

STEFAN

Yes, they had.

KRYSTINA

But it never came true.

RICHARD

Why not?

*(They don't answer).*

Okay. - They lived for a long time in the foreign country, they learned the language, and yet they didn't find their fortune. - And when they couldn't make the money go further - she had to sell her body.

KRYSTINA

He forced her.

STEFAN

It wasn't difficult.

KRYSTINA

That's what her brother said, but he never saw that her stony heart was bleeding.

RICHARD

A bleeding heart - and the happy ending out of reach. - When you came up to me at the exhibition - what had you planned? - What was my part in that game? Just another customer? - No? - Would you call the police and accuse me of rape? - Well, it's still possible. The phone is in the next room. - Dial one, one, two, they'll be here in five minutes.

KRYSTINA

And so what? You haven't done anything.

RICHARD

It would place me in a very unpleasant position. A lot of people know me. Everybody would turn their back on me. I'd lose my friends. I'd be frozen out.

KRYSTINA

Why should we do that? It wouldn't bring us any happy ending, would it?

RICHARD

That's what you're still hoping for?

KRYSTINA

Why not?

RICHARD (*to STEFAN*)

You said you'd like to kill me. You might roll me?

STEFAN

No.

RICHARD

You'd rather call the police and tell them that I raped your sister?

STEFAN

Yes. I would like to see you on the front page. I'd like to spoil your reputation. Ruin your career.

KRYSTINA

But he would never call the police.

RICHARD

No. None of you would call the police and we all know why. - Your visas expired long ago and you've got neither residence permit nor labour permit. So - the only one who has a good reason to call the police ...

KRYSTINA

Is you.

RICHARD

We can't deny it, can we?

KRYSTINA

No. (*After a lull*) You wouldn't do that, would you?

*(RICHARD gives her a Mona Lisa smile. Black-out. End of act one. Interval).*

## A C T T W O

*(The action goes on as if there hasn't been an interval).*

KRYSTINA

You wouldn't call the police, would you?

RICHARD

Why should I?

STEFAN

You'll just kick us out.

KRYSTINA

Stefan!

STEFAN

Without paying.

RICHARD

Don't be rude. If you're afraid you won't get your money, okay, let's have it done with now. *(He opens his wallet and takes out some notes)*. Here you are - double pay for one hour and one in advance. *(He holds out the notes. STEFAN doesn't take them. RICHARD holds them out to KRYSTINA. She looks away. Embarrassed? He puts them on the table)*.

STEFAN

You can't fuck her for that little.

RICHARD

I'm not going to.

STEFAN

Ha!

KRYSTINA

Why don't you kick us out?

RICHARD

Yes, why don't I? Your brother has given me more than one good cause. - Curiosity might be one of the reasons.

STEFAN

Curiosity?

RICHARD

After all, we've spent an interesting hour together, haven't we?



STEFAN

Oh yes, a very pleasant hour.

RICHARD

I don't think pleasant is the right word.

STEFAN

Give me a better one.

RICHARD

Sad? Painful? Titillating?

STEFAN

Titillating? What does that mean?

RICHARD

Exciting. - Anyway, I can't see why we shouldn't go on.

KRYSTINA

Thank you.

STEFAN (*sneering*)

Thank you. - (*To RICHARD*) My sister is a fool. There's no reason for her to say thank you. It's you - ... who'll ... - (*He can't find the word*) -

RICHARD

Benefit by the situation?

STEFAN

Yes.

RICHARD

In what way?

(*STEFAN shrugs his shoulders.*)

As far as I can see it's you and your sister who'll benefit. I can't tell what's going on, but it's quite obvious that there's something between you and your sister which needs some clarifying.

STEFAN

Are you a shrink?

RICHARD

No.

STEFAN

I don't need any clarifying.

RICHARD

It sticks out a mile.

STEFAN

It what?

RICHARD

It sticks out a mile. It's evident.

STEFAN

I don't want to go on any longer. I want to stop.

RICHARD (*to KRYSTINA*)

Do you?

KRYSTINA

No.

STEFAN (*sneering*)

We need the money.

KRYSTINA

I need the clarifying, Stefan.

(*STEFAN looks at her. Is he angry or scared?*)

RICHARD

Okay, we'll proceed with the story then, won't we? - You were at a loss for an ending. So let's leave that till later. I'll ask you a question instead, if you don't mind. In the first part of your fairy-tale the king's daughter went to see the king. She put her head against his chest and he stroke her brown hair and she felt that he loved her. But later in the evening he was out of his mind and raped her. How do you explain that?

STEFAN

It wasn't rape.

RICHARD

It wasn't?

STEFAN

No. And it wasn't the same evening. Come on, sister, a fairy-tale brings the truth to light, doesn't it? (*Sneering*) All the unpleasant layers of the human soul.

KRYSTINA

He *was* out of his mind.

STEFAN

Don't trust her.

RICHARD

Why not?

STEFAN

She didn't tell the truth.

RICHARD (*to KRYSTINA*)

What is the truth?

*(Silence).*

RICHARD (*to STEFAN*)

It's your turn then. What happened?

STEFAN

I don't know. But he wasn't mad. He wasn't even furious.

*(He walks around).*

RICHARD

You may be out of your mind without being furious?

*(STEFAN doesn't answer).*

What was going on?

STEFAN

I don't know. I wasn't there. - Those masks - ...

RICHARD

Yes?

STEFAN

Did you bring them home from Africa?

RICHARD

No. I've never been to Africa.

STEFAN

You've bought them?

RICHARD

My wife bought them.

STEFAN

So you have a wife. Why haven't we seen her?

RICHARD

She died some years ago. Do you like them?

STEFAN

How was your wife?

RICHARD

She was a very nice person. - Do you like them?

STEFAN

No.

RICHARD

Why not?

STEFAN

In my opinion they are a sad memorial.

RICHARD

Memorial?

STEFAN

A memorial to the memory of the great British Empire. Those days of glory and power. That's why you keep them on your wall. I see them as a cry of pain from an uppressed people. You know, like hunters hang the heads of the deers on their walls you hang the heads of the uppressed on your wall. You enjoy being in power.

RICHARD

I see.

STEFAN

And so do you. You and the rest of the English Establishment. You enjoy playing the part of the uppressor.

RICHARD

I'm afraid it's not that simple. You see, those masks were made before the Europeans came to Africa. - They may represent a cry of pain and who caused that? Not the great English Empire. As a matter of fact they may just as well represent the opposite, a shout of joy - or something quite different. Who knows? Why should it be pain?

(STEFAN *doesn't answer*).

By the way, I'm not a member of the Establishment.

KRYSTINA

What do they mean to you?

RICHARD

To me? I don't think they mean anything. Except that my wife liked them.

KRYSTINA

You're looking at them every day.

RICHARD

I don't pay much attention to them. - My wife was a painter. She painted portraits. Small portraits in an oldfashioned style, in fact a little like the covers on chocolate boxes, I'm afraid, but very lifelike - people appreciated her work.

KRYSTINA

But for her own walls she bought African masks. Strange, isn't it?

RICHARD

In a way, yes.

KRYSTINA

Perhaps she bought them because they represented something that she wasn't able to put in her own paintings.

RICHARD

Are *you* a shrink?

KRYSTINA

Something she missed?

*(Silence. They have a fast look at each other).*

Or something she had, but didn't dare to let out?

*(He hesitates. Does he regret that he began talking about his wife? He doesn't answer).*

STEFAN

Did you never ask her?

KRYSTINA

She wouldn't have answered, would she?

STEFAN

Oh! She had secrets?

RICHARD

We all have. As you know.

KRYSTINA

Some more than others.

RICHARD

Yes.

KRYSTINA

But now those secrets are buried for ever.

RICHARD

I suppose so.

KRYSTINA

Is that good?

RICHARD

What do *you* think?

KRYSTINA

I asked *you*.

RICHARD (*to STEFAN*)

What do you think? - Should secrets be buried for ever?

STEFAN

I don't want to take part in your chess game.

RICHARD

You'd rather spoil it?

STEFAN

Yes. I'm not a gambler.

RICHARD

Yes you are, but you're afraid of loosing.

STEFAN

Loosing to you?

RICHARD (*smiles*).

No. Not to me.

STEFAN

I can't see the sense in going on with this. What are you doing it for?

RICHARD

I don't know.

STEFAN (*sneering*)

You don't know.

RICHARD

That's true.

STEFAN

You're just (*sneering*) curious.

RICHARD

Yes. It might be as simple as that. Well, I think we should drop the masks and go on. - I have a feeling that something happened when the king's daughter sat together with her father. Something that your sister didn't tell us. Why won't *you* tell me about it?

STEFAN

I wasn't there.

RICHARD

Draw on your imagination, sweet prince. It's a fairy-tale. Come on, the king's daughter -

STEFAN

How the hell should I know? Why don't *you* tell us? Let's have your version.

RICHARD

My version?

STEFAN

Yes.

RICHARD

I wasn't there either.

STEFAN

Your version might be more interesting than mine. - Don't you think so, sweet princess?

*(KRYSTINA doesn't answer).*

RICHARD

Okay, why not? *(To KRYSTINA)* Any objections?

*(KRYSTINA shakes her head).*

Any hints?

*(KRYSTINA shakes her head).*

Well. - The king's daughter put her head against her father's chest. He stroke her hair and looked out of the window. The darkness was falling and the candle flickered casting odd shadows over the white walls. A feeling of loneliness crept around in the king's heart. He had lived in solitude for a very long time and nobody had cared for him. He leaned back. A pale reflection from the empty bottle fluttered like a green butterfly against the ceiling. He looked at the green, quivering spot and felt his daughter's hand on his chest. Her fingertips slid under his shirt. After a while he knew that she wanted to show how much she

loved him and since words can't do what gentle hands and lips can do they sat in silence and let their bodies speak. Whispering at first, but little by little, step by step, while their minds faded away, it was left to the bodies to fulfil what the animal's little hand had begun.

*(Silence).*

Am I right?

STEFAN

You make it sound like a beautiful poem.

RICHARD

Thank you.

STEFAN

Ugh.

KRYSTINA

It was.

STEFAN

No. It wasn't. It was two lecherous animals mating, copulating, fucking - I think there are a lot more four-letter words that might describe it, but we didn't learn them at university. It was nothing else but lust and greedy lechery. It was porn.

RICHARD

Judge not, that ye be not judged.

STEFAN

What??

RICHARD

So the bible says. I think you're too hard on her. Sometimes people are carried away by their feelings. They're drawn into something without willing it, they just can't withstand. Afterwards they regret and it never happens again.

STEFAN

It did happen again.

RICHARD

It did?

STEFAN

Yes, and she never regretted. Every afternoon she went to the little cottage together with her brother and every evening she went to her fathers bedroom. - *(To RICHARD)* You like this story, don't you?



*(He smacks his lips).*

A wonderful, slimy show. Suck at it, Granny.

RICHARD

I'm trying to understand it.

STEFAN

Stupid old ass. You don't understand anything.

RICHARD

That's why I'm asking.

STEFAN

We won't answer any more questions. This stupid game has gone on long enough. No more chess for us. *(To KRYSTINA)* Put on your clothes.

*(KRYSTINA doesn't react).*

RICHARD *(to KRYSTINA)*

You had a dream.

KRYSTINA

*He* had a dream.

STEFAN

Put on your clothes!!

KRYSTINA

But it never came true.

STEFAN

Krystina! - *(Suddenly calm. To RICHARD)* There was nothing special about that dream.

RICHARD

Why don't you tell me about it, then?

STEFAN

Everybody behind the Iron Curtain had that dream. - We had a childhood full of lies and poverty. Our teachers didn't believe in what they told us. Our parents kept silent. Everything was grey and hopeless. We were not allowed to go anywhere. And suddenly, while we were at the university, the wall fell and your world was no longer a far away dream, outside our reach. We didn't finish our English studies. To cut it short, the dream was to make a living here, to find some English firm and help them to get into the Polish market. So after the funeral we sold our father's house and went off on a tourist visa.

RICHARD

But the soap bubble burst.

KRYSTINA

Yes.

RICHARD

It couldn't come as a great surprise? Considering your background? Not to mention your missing permits?

*(STEFAN shrugs his shoulders).*

Don't you think your plan was very naive?

STEFAN

Could be.

KRYSTINA

It wasn't a plan. He made it up right now.

STEFAN

No, I didn't! - *(To RICHARD)* I can't take this any more. It's impossible.

*(He snatches the notes from the table and holds them out).*

Take back your money. We won't have it. We're leaving.

*(RICHARD ignores the notes. STEFAN throws them at him. He sweeps the drawings from the table and turns to KRYSTINA to grasp her arm, but she retreats. He follows her).*

RICHARD

Stop it!

*(STEFAN catches her).*

RICHARD

Leave her alone!

STEFAN

Mind your own business.

RICHARD

Let go!

*(STEFAN ignores him and drags KRYSTINA along).*

I'll call the police!

(STEFAN stops).

STEFAN

I was right. You'll call the police. I knew you would. I knew it.

RICHARD

Nonsense.

STEFAN

Yes, you would.

RICHARD

No. - I just won't tolerate any violence. You may leave if you want to, I won't be in the way. And if your sister wants to follow you I won't prevent her either. But as long as she wants to stay - ... Okay?

STEFAN

Okay.

*(He lets go of her).*

For Gods sake, no scandal.

RICHARD

You said it.

*(RICHARD pours out. STEFAN picks up his glass and gulps it down. RICHARD pours out once more).*

I won't do you any harm and I won't call the police.

*(RICHARD lifts his glass, first towards STEFAN, then towards KRYSTINA. She shakes her head).*

Why not?

*(She doesn't answer. He turns to STEFAN).*

Cheerio?

*(RICHARD sips from his glass. STEFAN empties his glass. KRYSTINA doesn't drink).*

RICHARD (to KRYSTINA)

A penny for your thoughts.

STEFAN

She's wondering what the old man is up to.

RICHARD (*to KRYSTINA*)

Are you?

STEFAN

I don't think there's much to wonder about. In the first place he wanted to look at a naked girl. He didn't dare to say it openly so he found a silly way out.

RICHARD

And secondly?

STEFAN

Secondly?

*(He picks up the drawings).*

RICHARD

What's his next move?

*(STEFAN hands the drawings to RICHARD).*

STEFAN

You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

RICHARD

Certainly.

*(He opens a drawer).*

Anyhow, it's too late to regret. *(To KRYSTINA)* Isn't it?

*(STEFAN sees a clothesline in the drawer).*

STEFAN

Hey, what's that? A rope.

*(He snatches it and holds it up).*

What the hell is a rope doing in your drawer? - I know! You used to bind your model! This man is really full of spicy ideas.

KRYSTINA

My brother is a fool.

STEFAN

What else have you got? Handcuffs? Whips?

KRYSTINA

Stop it, Stefan.

STEFAN

You'd better look out, sweet sister.

KRYSTINA

Mind your own business.

STEFAN

You can't trust him. *(To RICHARD)* Would you like to bind her?

RICHARD

To tie her up? No.

STEFAN

Yes you would, but you would never admit it. - What else can we offer him?

KRYSTINA

He's sick in his head.

STEFAN

Let's have some fun, sweet sister. She knows of so many ways to play with a man.

*(He picks up the notes and puts them in her bra).*

Cool cash and she'll do whatever you want.

RICHARD

It was a fee for posing.

*(He drops the drawings into a waste paper basket).*

STEFAN

Oh yes, fucking is extra. I think you can afford it.

*(She removes the notes from the bra and holds them out towards RICHARD. He doesn't accept them).*

RICHARD

It was also a fee for your fairy-tale.

KRYSTINA

We didn't finish it.

RICHARD

It doesn't matter.

KRYSTINA

Yes, it does.

STEFAN

No.

KRYSTINA

I'd like to go on if you don't mind? - Please?

RICHARD

I can't see the sense in going on.

KRYSTINA

I can.

RICHARD

I don't think we'll ever figure out what really happened.

STEFAN

Why should we? It's just a stupid story.

KRYSTINA

Is it?

STEFAN

Yes it is. *(To RICHARD)* And it's none of your business.

RICHARD

I think he's right.

STEFAN

Sure I'm right.

RICHARD *(to KRYSTINA)*

I think there's more to it than a stupid story. Anyway ... he's right. It's none of my business. When I began to understand that your fairy-tale wasn't pure imagination it appeared to me that I had ... well, some sort of a mission ... I thought that I could help.

STEFAN

Ha!

RICHARD

But I have realized that I've just been prying into something which had better remain in the dark. I can't help you.

KRYSTINA

Yes you can. You've been very helpful so far.

STEFAN

Helpful?

*(He looks at her. Angry? Scared? He picks up her clothes and holds them out, but she doesn't react).*

KRYSTINA

My brother had a dream.

RICHARD

He just told us.

KRYSTINA

He lied.

STEFAN

No, I didn't. I spoke the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

RICHARD

I don't want to know the truth. It stinks.

KRYSTINA

That's right. Our life stinks.

*(STEFAN is going to seize her arm).*

RICHARD

Leave her alone!

*(STEFAN throws the clothes at her and turns his back to her).*

KRYSTINA

You see, the little animal inside the girl enjoyed the situation. Her stony heart was proud of what she was doing. Meeting her brother in the small cottage in the afternoon and playing with her father's member in the evening. She enjoyed her father's mixture of lust and despair, and she enjoyed that her brother got more and more jealous of her father. Her brother's smile was no longer triumphant and gloating, it was scared. He wanted her for himself. No one else should touch her. That was his dream. And now he feared that he was about to lose her. So one day he followed his father who was walking in the garden. He followed him along the path to the pond and when the king stood at the bank he rushed forwards and pushed him into the cold black water.

STEFAN

No!

KRYSTINA

Yes, he pushed his poor daddy into the pond and held his head under the water until he was drowned. And next morning the king was found drifting among the white waterlilies. The king's daughter and her brother went to the funeral hand in hand and everybody felt for them. They never told anybody what had

happened. But after the funeral something very odd began to happen. Like a kernel that has lain in a dry desert for many years and suddenly is rained upon, the stony heart opened up and a small flower began to grow. The animal inside the young girl faded away and the king's daughter saw what her witch brother had done to her. The following days she walked around as if she was sleeping. She too had a dream, a dream that kept burning in her mind, but she couldn't make it come true. She tried, but it was impossible. So, one evening, when her witch brother once again had exploited her, she sneaked out of the castle. In the middle of the night she crossed the frontier on her bare feet and was now in a foreign country, long away from her witch brother. A country in which she hoped to find a new life in freedom and security. A life without a stony heart.

*(Embarrassing silence. STEFAN pours into his glass, lifts it and pulls a wry face).*

STEFAN

Cheerio!

*(He gulps it down).*

RICHARD *(to KRYSTINA)*

But she didn't succeed.

STEFAN

Her brother the prince went out to rescue her. He mounted his white horse and rode after her and found her. He told her that he loved her and wanted to live together with her. Come back with me, he said. I know quite well that my love of you is unnatural, I know it'll be severely condemned, but I can't help it. I love you.

KRYSTINA

But long ago the king's daughter had found out that his love wasn't real love.

STEFAN

Yes, it is, the white prince said, and if you run away once more I'll follow you wherever you go. I'll follow you to the end of this world and into the next. Believe me, I do love you and I know for sure that you also love me.

KRYSTINA

No, she said.

STEFAN

Yes, you do. *(To RICHARD)* I'm telling the truth.

*(Silence).*



KRYSTINA

What do you think of us?

RICHARD

I don't know. It's rather complicated.

STEFAN

The shrink said. You're right. It *is* complicated.

KRYSTINA

No. It *was* complicated. Now it's simple. The furred animal has gone. The stone heart has gone. Those feelings which the white prince calls love never had as much as a tiny touch of neither love nor affection. They were ugly and disgusting, but they are all gone, thank God.

RICHARD

But the witch brother is still there.

KRYSTINA

He has lost his power.

STEFAN

When did that happen?

*(KRYSTINA doesn't answer).*

Little sweet sister, when did that happen?

*(KRYSTINA doesn't answer).*

It didn't happen. He's still in power.

RICHARD

And obviously he enjoys it.

*(STEFAN lifts his glass).*

STEFAN

Na zdrowie! *(Polish = Cheerio).*

*(He becomes aware that his glass is empty. He pours out).*

Na zdrowie!

*(KRYSTINA doesn't react. He drinks. Puts the glass upon the table and speaks to one of the African masks).*

Pain, that's what you're feeling. Pain and passion.

*(He takes down the mask. He puts it on and dances like a tribesman slowly stamping to and fro. KRYSTINA looks at him in disgust).*

RICHARD

It seems to me that the fairy-tale has gone off the rails.

KRYSTINA

What are you going to do about it?

*(RICHARD shrugs his shoulders).*

KRYSTINA

You wish you'd never gone to the exhibition. Don't you?

*(RICHARD doesn't answer).*

That we've never met.

RICHARD

Yes. *(After a lull)* And no.

*(STEFAN goes on dancing. He moves onto the platform).*

KRYSTINA

You might throw us out?

*STEFAN (still dancing)*

Bright idea, bright idea, bright idea, bright idea. Very bright, very bright, very bright, very bright. Oomba, oomba, oomba, oomba, oomba, bright idea, bright idea -

*(He's become so noisy that they can't talk, but eventually he stops and sits down on the chair on the platform and takes off the mask).*

Do you love me now?

KRYSTINA

How could I?

*(He puts on the mask).*

RICHARD

Please don't stamp, the ceiling downstairs is a bit flimsy.

STEFAN

Take it easy. This time I'm a witch brother watching an old, slobbering pig who's staring at my sister. You enjoy it, don't you? Don't be ashamed. She enjoys it too. She loves to be loo-

ked at, don't you Krystina?

KRYSTINA

Stop it.

STEFAN

Why don't you dress, then? - What are you up to? He won't go to bed with you. I'm sure he would if he could, but he can't. And your fairy-tale - what has become of your pretty little fairy-tale? Nothing but a lot of messy nonsense. And there's nothing more to tell. Furthermore the gentleman from the English Establishment doesn't care any more. Neither about you nor about your stories. You've done fine, (*in Polish*) Gratuluje, gratuluje. (*Means 'Congratulations'*).

RICHARD (*to KRYSTINA*)

You had a dream, you said. But you didn't tell about it?

(KRYSTINA *doesn't answer*).

It was burning on your mind.

KRYSTINA

Yes.

RICHARD

Would you like to tell about it now?

(KRYSTINA *looks at STEFAN for a moment before she answers*).

KRYSTINA

No.

RICHARD

May I ask why not?

STEFAN

No you may not. The dream is about me and it would be very revealing to tell it. (*To Krystina*) Am I right?

(KRYSTINA *doesn't answer*).

Yes, I am. It would tell something very surprising about her. A secret from the deepest layer of her furred soul. She has tried to persuade herself that she will no longer play the little games we used to play, but she can't help it, she longs for it, she hungers for it, she can't do without those games. Admit it, Krystina. Admit it.

RICHARD

Those games?

STEFAN

Show him, Krystina, show him. The English pervert likes to watch. So let him. Poor man, he isn't able to fuck you, so let him watch, watch, watch. Go, get the rope.

KRYSTINA

The rope?

STEFAN

Yes, my love.

KRYSTINA

He's drunk.

STEFAN

And so what? Get the rope and let's get going. In honour of the very venerable English pervert we'll perform one of the shows that the king's daughter and her wicked brother enjoyed in their little cottage. Have a good time, sir, you'll get a lot of kick out of this.

*(KRYSTINA walks slowly up to the drawer).*

Enjoy it, mr. Pervert. Enjoy it. It'll be a great pleasure. You'll never forget it. Sit down and watch. It'll be the most exciting show you've ever seen.

*(KRYSTINA picks up the clothesline).*

Furthermore - since you've so much enjoyed the king's daughter's fairy-tale - we will do our very best to tidy up the messy story and give it a beautiful ending. So - here we go. I love you, said the white prince, and you love me too. You ran away in the middle of the night, grieving our father's death. But now I'm here, and I'll never let you go. I know that you're angry. I know that I deserve to be punished. So tie me up, sweet sister.

*(During the rest of his soliloqui she ties him to the chair so that he can't move).*

And she took the rope and tied him up. And afterwards she picked up his riding whip. She whipped his face, his arms, his hands, his body, his legs. He sat without a word, without a cry, he knew he deserved it, he had killed her beloved father and she must have some sort of revenge. Eventually she stopped and sat down, exhausted. But anger doesn't exclude love. After a while she looked at him and two tiny tears ran down her cheeks. Pity and love filled her heart and the two tiny tears were soon followed by a quiet weeping. The love of her brother had come back

and she decided that she would show it by doing what he liked most of all.

*(He's now tied up to the chair. She picks up the plastic bag. Her moves are now sexy, but when she turns her back to STEFAN and looks at RICHARD her face expresses disgust and despair. She rubs the plastic bag against her body pretending to be lecherous. Her performance is vulgar, but at the same time there's a by-play trying to tell RICHARD that he shall not believe what he's watching).*

She stopped crying and came up to him and kissed him on his forehead.

*(She kisses the plastic bag).*

She kissed him on his lips and stroke his hair. Her hands caressed his body, gently and exciting and - what was the word - titillating.

*(She caresses the plastic bag).*

Titillating. Oh, mr. Pervert from the holy Establishment, you would have enjoyed it, I assure you. Her hands aroused the old feelings, the fire between the legs.

*(She takes out a banana from the plastic bag and lets go of the bag).*

Look at her, mr. Pervert - eat her with your eyes, swallow her -

*(She caresses the banana, opens the end of it, kisses the tip of it, licks it, sucks it, occasionally with a rapid glance at RICHARD expressing her disgust).*

She's going to do to me what she often did in the little cottage. It's the most exciting act of love you can get, I'm sure your little chocolate box wife never did it to you - but wait and see -

*(Slowly and with sexy movements and sucking at the banana she takes off one of her black stockings. She rubs it against her cheek and the banana and her lips and her Mount of Venus and holds it under his nose).*

The smell of her royal rose bud was like a love song. It told the white prince that her love and affection made her willing to do whatever he wanted. Her feelings for him and her passion were as deep and strong as in those bygone days in the little cottage.

*(He can't move his hands, but his fingers start drum-*

*ming on the arm rest. She peels the banana, licks it, the byplay is still going on, she dances to his drumming, sucking the banana and waving her stocking round her body).*

And now she kneeled between his legs. Her lips caressed his chest, she bent down -

*(Suddenly she stops being sexy. She puts the banana into the stocking and places it where the knee is supposed to be. He stops drumming).*

She bent down! -

*(She holds the stocking in both hands and swings it to and fro. The banana is now a long lump in the middle of it).*

Come along, sister, she bent down -

*(She ignores him).*

and opened up - ... What the hell are you doing?

*(She removes his mask).*

KRYSTINA

I don't think our kind host is appreciating your show. (To RICHARD) Are you?

STEFAN

Of course he is. You know nothing about men, he enjoyed it. Look at his pants. Can't you see?

*(KRYSTINA hangs the mask on the wall).*

If you can't see go up to him and feel. He was looking forward to watch the happy ending. (To RICHARD) Weren't you?

*(Silence).*

Oh yeah - and not only watch. (To KRYSTINA) If you had known how to play your cards you wouldn't have stopped.

*(She steps onto the platform and stands behind him).*

Where are you?

*(She holds up the stocking in both hands and slowly lowers it until it is in front of his face).*

What on earth are you doing? What's the idea?

*(The stocking is swinging to and fro).*

Stop it! Loosen me. Krystina! I'll ...

*(She gags him. The banana is in his mouth and the rest of the stocking around his head. He makes incomprehensible sounds).*

RICHARD *(after a lull)*

This dream of yours - ?

KRYSTINA

I won't tell you about it.

RICHARD

It was burning on your mind.

KRYSTINA

It still is.

RICHARD

Well?

*(KRYSTINA doesn't react).*

You won't change your mind?

*(KRYSTINA doesn't react).*

I think you should.

*(KRYSTINA shrugs her shoulders).*

It's not flattering. Is that why?

KRYSTINA

Yes.

RICHARD *(smiling)*

A dream from the unpleasant layers of the human soul.

KRYSTINA

Yes. - I wanted to kill him.

RICHARD *(smiling)*

Was that all?

KRYSTINA

Yes.

RICHARD

I can't say that I don't understand you.

KRYSTINA

You don't? - If you were God, would you have forgiven me?

RICHARD

Forgiven what? The dream or the killing?

KRYSTINA

The killing.

RICHARD

I'm not God.

KRYSTINA

What about the dream?

RICHARD *(smiling)*

I'm not the sandman either.

KRYSTINA

You're very helpful.

RICHARD

I'm afraid that nobody's able to forgive you. Not even God would succeed in saying that thy sins should be forgiven thee. You know why? You would never stop feeling guilty. You're not that kind of person. But I think I'd understand you. Not only did he ruin your childhood, but if this went on he'd ruin your whole life. You had to get rid of him and what else could you do? You've tried to fly from him, to hide, to get away, but no, he wouldn't let go of you. I think ...

*(The telephone rings).*

Excuse me -

KRYSTINA

You would have done the same?

*(The telephone rings again. He goes out to answer it).*

KRYSTINA

Yes, what else?

*(She picks up the plastic bag and enters the platform. Standing behind STEFAN she pulls the plastic bag over his head and ties the ends of the stocking around his neck. Afterwards she sets the folding screen in front of him. He makes incomprehensible sounds. She steps*



*down, picks up the drawings from the waste paper basket and looks at them. RICHARD returns and immediately observes the drawings in KRYSTINA's hand).*

RICHARD

I'm sorry. I regret having done that.

KRYSTINA

Thy sins are forgiven thee.

RICHARD

At least I meant no harm.

*(Sounds from STEFAN and noise from his chair. He's trying to get loose. Neither RICHARD nor the audience can see him).*

RICHARD *(smiling)*

You couldn't stand looking at him?

KRYSTINA

No. - I couldn't stand him at all.

*(During the following dialogue the noise from STEFAN goes on. Not all the time, but frequently. It becomes weaker and weaker).*

KRYSTINA

You meant no harm.

RICHARD

No.

KRYSTINA

What *did* you mean?

RICHARD

Yes, whatever possessed me to do that? I don't know. I'm not the sort of person that acts spontaneously and usually I keep to myself, but when you and your brother came up to me at the exhibition and he suddenly spoke to me ...

*(He reacts to the noise).*

He's rather annoyed, isn't he?

KRYSTINA

He has his reasons.

*(Silence).*

RICHARD

Shouldn't you -

*(His hand indicates: go and release STEFAN).*

KRYSTINA

No. - My brother spoke to you?

RICHARD

Yes.

KRYSTINA

And then?

*(RICHARD shrugs his shoulders).*

You looked at me.

RICHARD

Yes.

KRYSTINA

What did you see?

RICHARD

A pretty young woman. In fact I wouldn't hesitate to call her beautiful.

KRYSTINA

Tempting?

RICHARD

Well - most men at my age are supposed to have lost the interest.

KRYSTINA

Most men?

RICHARD

Yes.

KRYSTINA

You belong to the minority who hasn't, don't you?

*(STEFAN makes a violent effort).*

RICHARD

It sounds as if his patience is wearing rather thin.

KRYSTINA

Don't you think he deserves it?

RICHARD

It's not up to me to decide.

KRYSTINA

You're not God?

RICHARD

No.

KRYSTINA

A pretty young woman, but you didn't find her tempting.

RICHARD

I didn't say that.

KRYSTINA

What *did* you say?

RICHARD

I didn't say anything, but I don't mind confessing that I found her very attractive.

KRYSTINA

You wondered how far you could come?

RICHARD

No. I wondered why you looked down. I got only a glimpse of your eyes, but I was puzzled. They seemed to be scared. I also wondered why your brother was that ambiguous. He behaved as if he was going to sell you. But if he hadn't taken me for a painter, and if I hadn't kept silent, we wouldn't have ended up here. It was my fault that it became a silly joke.

KRYSTINA

A joke.

RICHARD

Yes.

KRYSTINA

A silly joke.

RICHARD

Sorry. That's not what I meant. But how could I know that it should develop into - well - ...

*(He points to the folding screen).*

At least it began as a silly joke.

KRYSTINA

Are you sure?

RICHARD (*after a lull*)

No.

(*Silence. STEFAN has now become silent.*)

KRYSTINA

You found me attractive?

RICHARD

I suppose so.

(*Silence.*)

Of course I did. I still do. It's ridiculous, isn't it?

KRYSTINA

No. - Am I more attractive than your old model?

RICHARD

I never had any model.

KRYSTINA

And you are not a painter. But you dreamed of a model?

(*Silence.*)

Sometimes?

RICHARD

I think most men do.

KRYSTINA

All men do.

RICHARD

Said the king's daughter who no longer cherished any illusions about the male sex. And a scornful smile hovered about her lips.

KRYSTINA

You're wrong. The king's daughter is still too young to give up her dreams. When she was no longer spellbound by her witch brother and she realized what she had been the victim of, and what he had bereft her, then her new heart began longing for something that she'd never met. Some-thing that had to exist somewhere. And had to be found. She dreamed of a lust that went hand in hand with love and affection, a lust growing up from happiness instead of indignity, from joy instead of spiteful tears.

*(Silence).*

Do you understand what I'm talking about?

RICHARD

I'm trying to.

KRYSTINA

You and your wife -

*(Silence).*

- did you - ... ?

RICHARD *(sarcastically)*

My little sweet chocolate box wife?

KRYSTINA

I never said that.

RICHARD

I know.

KRYSTINA

I didn't even think it.

*(RICHARD doesn't answer).*

I'm sorry.

RICHARD

If your dream came true ...

KRYSTINA

What dream? The dream of finding a new way of living together with someone I could really love?

RICHARD

The dream of your brother being dead.

KRYSTINA

If it came true? I don't know.

RICHARD

Suppose we were still in the land of your fairy-tale and the witch brother was sitting behind the screen stone-dead. What would the king's daughter do?

KRYSTINA

She would look at the foreign king she had just met. She was very grateful to him for having helped her to get rid of the curse

that until now had reigned her life. He had encouraged her to do what she for a long time had dreamed of doing, but never dared to. She knew that he would understand her and she had a feeling that he more than liked her, but she didn't know if he would close his eyes for what she had done - or if he would call the hangman. So when the king entered the room she knelt down and confessed what she had done. The king looked behind the screen. When he turned round his face expressed only a faint air of surprise. What do you want me to do? he asked. I want you to bury him in your garden, she said. No one knows he is here. Nobody will miss him, nobody will ever ask for him. Once he's gone he'll be forgotten forever.

*(During the last sentences RICHARD has got a foreboding of evil. He rises and removes the folding screen. STEFAN has collapsed. KRYSTINA goes up to RICHARD and kneels. He turns round and looks at her).*

If you'll do that, she said, I'll stay with you and give you all my love and affection. My new heart, which you have helped to liberate from evil suppression and abuse, will be yours forever.

*(She puts her arms around his legs).*

I'll show my gratitude and my love in all ways. I'll do to you whatever you like, be it gentle and soft or like the wildness behind the mask that your wife didn't dare to let out. So she spoke and the foreign king listened. His mind was split. His head knew what the law demanded, but his heart told him that the law was blind.

*(She puts her cheek against his legs).*

He was a wise man. His long life had taught him to bear with human frailty. He knew loneliness and despair and his body couldn't help sending a subdued message to the mind. He looked down at the king's daughter. She bowed her head, waiting for the sentence to be passed upon her. Her brown hair fell down and he looked at her white neck, a neck prepared for the hangman's axe. He waited for a long time and then he said -

RICHARD *steps back*

You must be mad.

*(He looks at her, tenderly. Silence).*

And I ... I must be mad too.

*(He steps forward, grasps her hands and helps her stand up).*

It can't be helped.

*(He spreads out his arms. They embrace. Blackout).*

THE END