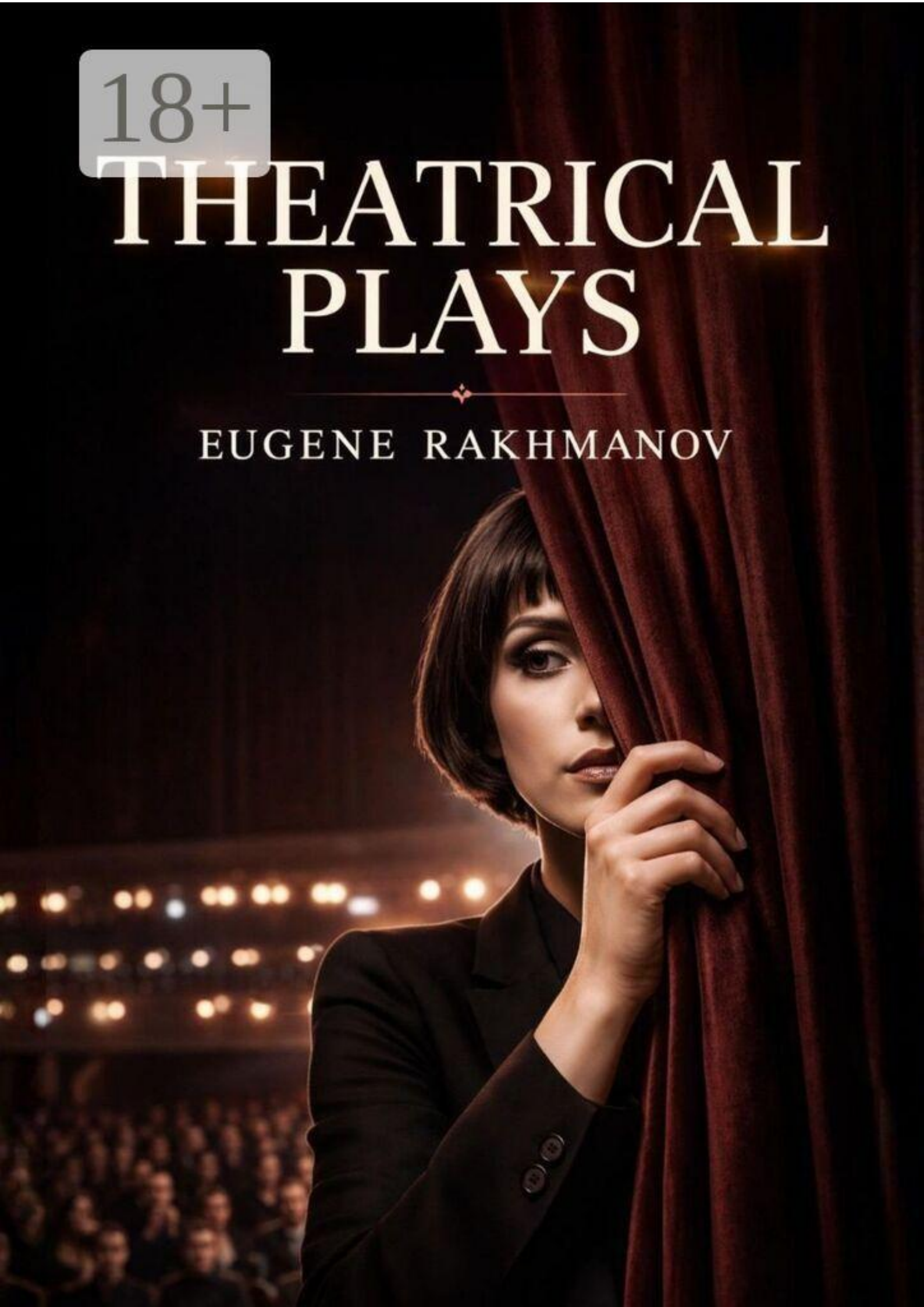


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# THEATRICAL PLAYS

—♦—  
EUGENE RAKHMANOV



Eugene Rakhmanov

**Theatrical plays**

«Издательские решения»

**Rakhmanov E. A.**

Theatrical plays / E. A. Rakhmanov — «Издательские решения»,

A collection of comedy plays: three funny, absurd, and very relatable stories about how we say one thing, think another, and dream of a third.

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# Theatrical plays

## Eugene Alexandrovich Rakhmanov

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Eugene Alexandrovich Rakhmanov

Dear Reader!

You are holding in your hands a collection that contains three comedic plays. They are about how we say one thing and think another. How we are afraid of appearing weak, funny, or wrong. How we pretend to be someone we are not. And then something awkward, loud, or absurd happens — and the masks fall off. Beneath them, it turns out, are simply people. With their own fears, grievances, hopes, and very different ideas about happiness. I have made the font in this book large so that you can read without straining your eyes.

Wishing you an enjoyable read!

All characters, names, first names, patronymics, names of populated places, streets, firms, organizations, enterprises, companies, as well as the events described in this book, are fictitious. Any resemblance to historical events or to persons living or dead is coincidental.

## **COMEDY PLAY IN ONE ACT**

## «MY CAUCASIAN SELF»

### Characters:

**Sergey**, a middle-aged man.

**Alina**, Sergey's girlfriend.

**Alik**, speaks with a Caucasian accent, a voice in Sergey's head.

**Anton Pavlovich**, Sergey's director, a voice on the phone.

**Sergey's Neighbor**, of strong build.

**Moisha Abramovich**, speaks with a Jewish accent, a voice in Sergey's head.

*The action takes place in Sergey's one-room studio apartment.*

### Scene 1

*Sunday, half past eight in the morning. Sergey woke up in a good mood and, quietly humming some song, cheerfully and smiling, prepared breakfast for himself. This is his first day off in the last two weeks. His director actively takes advantage of the fact that Sergey is a hardworking, responsible, and humble person. And therefore he loads him with work without any hesitation, additional pay, or extra thanks. Sergey was eating his breakfast and humming a cheerful tune under his breath, when suddenly he heard a voice:*

**Alik.** — Brother, hello!

*(Sergey stopped humming, chewing, and listened. He looked left, right, and after a couple of seconds returned to his breakfast.)*

**Alik.** — I apologize wildly, brother, hello!

*(Sergey listened again.)*

**Sergey.** — Imagined it! (Smiled, resumed eating.)

**Alik.** — Brother, forgive me, I don't want to interrupt your breakfast. Deepest apologies, but I'm here!

*(Sergey choked, spat out a piece of food, cleared his throat, and jumped off his chair.)*

**Sergey.** (Frightened.) — Who's here? Who is it? (He started pacing sharply around the room, nervously looking around.)

**Alik.** — Brother, don't worry so much. It's me!

**Sergey.** (Eyes bulging with fear, cleared his throat.) — Who's here? (He said in a thin voice.) Who's here? (Paces the room, looks around, coughs.) Who... (Hit his chest with his fist, cleared his throat.) Who's here? Come out! I'm calling the police! Come out quickly! (Paces the room and looks around.)

**Alik.** — Brother, don't shout like that! I can't come out, sorry, I can't!

**Sergey.** — Come out! (Sharply grabbed the smartphone lying on the table.) I'm calling the police! (Nervously pokes his finger at the smartphone screen.)

**Alik.** — Vay, what are you doing, brother? Don't call the police! We'll be disgraced, concretely, brother! Stop it!

**Sergey.** (Stopped in the middle of the room, sharply looks around.) — I'm telling you for the last time, come out! Or...

**Alik.** (Interrupts Sergey.) — No need for «or,» brother! I can't come out, I swear! I'm inside you!

**Sergey.** (Bulged his already frightened eyes, swallowed saliva.) — What? (Shouted.) Come out quickly! (Shouted in a hoarse, raspy voice.) Where are you? (Coughs, looks around.)

**Alik.** — Bless you, brother!

**Sergey.** (Cleared his throat.) — I didn't sneeze, I'm just coughing! (Looks around.)

**Alik.** — Still, bless you, brother!

**Sergey.** (Calming down a bit.) — Thank you.

**Alik.** — You're welcome, brother!

**Sergey.** — Where are you? Who are you? Come out. (Stands in the middle of the room, slowly looking around. Tries to understand where the voice is coming from. Squints. Listens.)

**Alik.** — I can't come out, brother! I'd love to, but I can't, really, sorry!

**Sergey.** — Why can't you come out? Where are you? Who are you?

**Alik.** — I'm Alik! I'm in your head, brother! I can't come out. I want to come out myself, but I can't, sorry!

**Sergey.** (Smiles.) — What? Is this a joke? In which head? (Shakes his head in denial, smiles.) Alright, come out and leave! I won't call anyone if you come out and leave right now! Come on, come out and goodbye! I didn't see you, you weren't here. Come out! (Puts the phone on the table.) Well... are you coming out or not?

**Alik.** — Brother, sorry if I suddenly offend you right now... but you're probably a little stupid?! Oi! (Frightened.) Sorry, brother, not stupid, just a tiny bit foolish. Just a little bit. A little! Just a droplet!

**Sergey.** — What? (Surprised. Nervous smile.)

**Alik.** — Brother, don't be offended at me, okay... I'm telling you, telling you, and you just shake your head back and forth, shout, you don't hear me at all! I can't come out or leave, okay? I'm in your head. Do you understand, brother? There's no way I can leave, brother! Forgive me, okay? Don't be offended at me! Alright?

*Pause.*

*Sergey smiles, slowly examines his small apartment. He realizes there's simply nowhere to hide here. He frowns, smiles again, gets scared, scratches his head with his hand. He doesn't understand what's happening at all. Thoughts in his head get tangled, pile on top of each other, interrupt each other. From fatigue and nervous exhaustion, he sits down on a chair.*

*Pause.*

**Sergey.** (In a quiet, calm voice.) — I'm just tired. I had a hard week... Two weeks! I'm exhausted! My brain is tired! And therefore...

**Alik.** (Interrupting.) — You hear voices in your head.

**Sergey.** (Calmly.) — Yes. (Frightened.) What?

**Alik.** — Listen, brother, forgive me, but you're scaring me! I'm telling you honestly, okay?

**Sergey.** (Nervously.) — What? (Hysterically.) What?

**Alik.** — Vay, what are you like. What? What? Do you know any other words, or not? Vay... (Reproachfully.) You're complicated, kapets.

**Sergey.** (Jumped up from the chair, nervously pacing the apartment. Rubs his face with his palms, slaps himself.) — This is just a dream! Yes. I'm sleeping!

**Alik.** — Vay, brother, you're psychotic! Why are you hitting yourself? That hurts! Oi, you're nervous. Oi, mama. Why are you doing that?

**Sergey.** (Clutched his head with his hands.) — No, no, no. I'm not sleeping! Oh God... I've gone mad! (Shouted.) Aaaaah...

**Alik.** — Brother, brother. Wow. Why are you shouting like that? Calm down. What's wrong with you? You'll scare the neighbors! Never mind the neighbors. You're scaring me!

**Sergey.** (Hysterically.) — Enough! Get out of my head! (Hits himself on the head with his hands.) Get out, get out, get out.

**Alik.** — Brother. (Shouted.) Brooother. If you don't stop behaving like a capricious woman, I'll... I'll... I'll eat your brains!

**Sergey.** (Stopped hitting himself. Frightened.) — What?

**Alik.** (Menacingly.) — I'll eat your brain! Yes! I'll eat it like lyulya-kebab.

**Sergey.** (Anxiously.) — What? How will you do that?

**Alik.** (Slowly and menacingly.) — With pleasure, brother.

**Sergey.** (Slowly sat down on the chair.) — What? (Frightened.) Can you do that?

**Alik.** (Drawn out.) — Yeees...

**Sergey.** (Covered his face with his hands and started to whine softly.) — Oooo. God, no. Don't. Who are you?

**Alik.** (Laughed.) — Vay, you're funny. How can I eat your brain? I don't even have a mouth! I don't know how to do that. I don't like brains, I like shashlik. I cook. Vay, delicious!

**Sergey.** (Bewildered.) — If you're in my head, how do you grill shashlik? (Smiled.) I don't have a barbecue in there!

**Alik.** — Oi... (Hurt.) Very funny. A humorist. A stand-up comedian, simply! Ay.

*Pause.*

**Sergey.** (Calmed down. Sighed heavily.) — Who are you?

**Alik.** (Nervously.) — What? Again? Brother, are you definitely cuckoo? You hear badly, yes? I already told you, I'm Alik!

**Sergey.** (Sniffled, smiled.) — No, you didn't understand. Who are you? How did you end up in my head?

**Alik.** — Ah... (Smiling.) You mean that. And I already thought you were definitely cuckoo. Don't be offended, brother, but you're...

**Sergey.** — What, me?

**Alik.** — Never mind, brother! Don't take it to heart.

**Sergey.** — I'm not taking it, but you're in my head. How did you get in there? Who are you?

**Alik.** — Oi, brother, you'll be surprised, brother!

**Sergey.** — At what?

**Alik.** — At the answer, brother.

**Sergey.** (Shouted.) — Who are you?

**Alik.** (Frightened.) — Ay, why are you shouting?

**Sergey.** (Nervously.) — Who are you?

**Alik.** — I'm your inner voice. Your second «self.» Well, a more, like, beautiful one, of course, brutal, vaay, such a cool «self»! Such a handsome man. Vay, Vasya.

**Sergey.** (Surprised.) — What? How is that? Which Vasya?

**Alik.** (Loudly and nervously.) — Which Vasya, eh? What are you talking about? I'm Alik! Alik! Are you stupid, or what? Hey, I can't. I'm your «self»! Your second «self»! What's not to understand here?

*Pause.*

*(Sergey sat silently on the chair and stared at one point. Various thoughts raced through his head like an express train. There was hell knows what going on in there. He thought and didn't think at the same time. A mess! Chaos! A jumble of thoughts and words! Finally he pulled himself together, and*

*more or less adequate thoughts began to enter his head. He thought about his life. About work. About Alina. Oh God! Alina! What to do? What to do now? What to do about Alina now?*

*Sergey's girlfriend named Alina. She is young, beautiful, smart, and Sergey already saw her as his wife and the mother of his children. Yes, it's that serious! They haven't had intimacy yet, haven't even kissed. It's just that Sergey didn't want to rush things, because everything is so serious with them! And now... Now that he's gone mad, what will happen to her? What will happen to their relationship?*

*Sergey grew sad and dejected. Depression, arm in arm with despair, began to wash over his heart.*

**Alik.** (Smirking slyly.) — Brother, who is Alina? Eh?

**Sergey.** (Thoughtfully.) — What?

**Alik.** — Who is Alina, brother? Your girlfriend, yes? Pretty? Will you introduce me?

**Sergey.** (Frightened.) — What? No, no, no. Not that! (Jumped off the chair, gesticulates and looks at the walls, then at the ceiling.) Don't even think about it! Got it? Do you understand me?

**Alik.** — Vay, how nervous you are! I just asked. Why are you so worried! (Smiling.) Why are you looking around? I'm in your head! I'm not on the ceiling. I'm not on the wall either, I'm not a painting.

**Sergey.** (Pacing chaotically around the room, nervous. Thoughtfully.) — My God... my sweet Alina, my beloved! What will happen? How can this be? How now?

**Alik.** — Heeey. I'm getting dizzy from you! (Nervously.) Stop pacing. Sit down! Tell me what's bothering you? We'll solve everything, brother, speak!

**Sergey.** (Sat down abruptly on the bed.) — What to do? (Thoughtfully.) She'll probably go to someone else now?

**Alik.** — Heeey... Why do you say that, brother? What happened, speak!

**Sergey.** (Nervously.) — What happened? You're still asking? (Got up from the bed and started pacing the room again.) You're in my head! I'm crazy! That's what happened! (Sat down on the chair.)

**Alik.** — Vay. Why do you say that, brother? You're not crazy! You're normal!

*Pause.*

**Alik.** — Weeell... Almost normal.

**Sergey.** — What does that mean?

**Alik.** (Slowly, pronouncing each word.) — Well, don't be offended, brother... it's just that you're...

**Sergey.** (Interrupting.) — Just say it already, I won't be offended! Speak!

**Alik.** — You're a jellyfish!

**Sergey.** (Indignantly.) — What?

**Alik.** — A bit of a shy one.

**Sergey.** (Stood up from the chair.) — What?

**Alik.** — Soft-bodied. Soft-bodily. Pfft. Soft-bodily-ish. There! Everyone uses you! You're too kind!

**Sergey.** (Sat down on the chair.) — Well, thank you!

*Pause.*

**Sergey.** — Oh, go to hell.

**Alik.** (Smiling.) — Don't be offended, brother. I'll help you! You're my brother, after all!

**Sergey.** (Angrily.) — You'll help me? You? With what, I wonder?

**Alik.** (Briskly.) — I'll help, brother! Don't even worry, everything will be as it should, I'm here!

**Sergey.** — That's what scares me!

**Alik.** — Don't be scared, brother. I'm with you! We'll sort out your affairs, here and there. Everything will be smooth!

## Scene 2

*Their conversation was interrupted by the noise of a drum kit. The feeling was that the ceiling was about to collapse.*

**Alik.** (Indignantly and bewildered.) — What is that...

**Sergey.** (Interrupting.) — That's the neighbor upstairs. (Sarcastically.) The drummer!

**Alik.** (Indignantly.) — What? Do something already. Plaster is falling on my head!

**Sergey.** (Excusing himself, guiltily.) — What can I do? I went to see him once. Knocked on the door. Thought a teenager would open it, but there was this huge bruiser!

**Alik.** — So? What did you do?

**Sergey.** (Sadly.) — I left! I just looked at him and... left!

**Alik.** (Indignantly.) — Vay, well, you're something else. Lucky for you I'm with you. Let's go, we'll sort it out now. Grab a baseball bat, brass knuckles, let's go!

**Sergey.** (Frightened.) — What? We're not going anywhere! He'll stop playing soon. Besides, I don't have any baseball bat.

**Alik.** — Does he drum like that often?

**Sergey.** — Every day!

**Alik.** (Indignantly.) — What?

**Sergey.** — Ever since he moved in six months ago, he's been drumming! He's probably a musician, or just has that hobby.

**Alik.** (Angrily.) — Vay, you... we need to...

*The sound of drums faded. As suddenly as it had started.*

**Sergey.** (Joyfully.) — See, it's all over. Silence!

**Alik.** (In a low voice, gritting his teeth. Calmly but angrily.) — Yes, I hear.

**Sergey.** (Joyfully.) — As a rule, he doesn't drum for long. Half an hour, maybe an hour. But that's rare. (Frightened, jumped up from the chair.) Oh God, Alina!

**Alik.** — Vay, what are you doing? You scared me. My heart almost stopped completely! Why are you shouting?

**Sergey.** (Pacing nervously around the apartment.) — I forgot. I completely forgot!

**Alik.** (Loudly.) — Forgot what? What happened?

**Sergey.** (Pacing back and forth across the apartment.) — Alina is coming soon! (Looked at the clock on the wall.) In half an hour! What do I do?

**Alik.** (Bewildered.) — What's the matter? So she'll come, so what! Don't you want her to come?

**Sergey.** — I want her to come very much! I invited her myself yesterday! We're supposed to watch a movie together. On an online cinema.

**Alik.** (Smiling.) — Well, wonderful! Then why are you running around? What's all the worry, brother?

**Sergey.** (Stopped near the chair.) — There's a stranger's voice in my head. You! That's what happened! Should I tell her about it or not? (Sat down on the chair.) She'll definitely leave me! (Sadly.) Why would she need a madman with a voice in his head? No. She doesn't need one!

**Alik.** (Indignantly.) — Vay, you're panicking. Everything will be fine! Watch your movie calmly, don't worry about anything! (Confidently.) I won't bother you. I'll be as quiet as a fish. Just you, like a brother, keep quiet too, okay?! Don't tell her anything about me, alright? Just in case, you know. You can tell her later when you're marrying off your grandchildren! (Laughed.) Got it, yes? A joke. You understood, yes? Such humor. It means: never tell her about me! Got it, yes? Such a joke, but kind of not a joke! Well, you understood?

**Sergey.** (Interrupting.) — Yes, I understood. I'm not stupid!

**Alik.** (Doubtingly.) — Weeell...

**Sergey.** — What?

**Alik.** — Nothing, brother. Nothing. I'm saying you're smart as hell. You understand everything right away. No need to tell you many times, explain. A capital wunderkind, yes. Well, you understood?

**Sergey.** (Angrily and confidently.) — I understood! I hope you'll keep your word?

**Alik.** — What word, brother?

**Sergey.** (Loudly.) — That you'll be quiet when Alina comes!

**Alik.** — Aaah... Yes, yes, yes, brother, don't worry! I remember, I remember.

**Sergey.** (Distrustfully.) — The way you say that. Unsurely! Hard to believe.

*(The doorbell rang.)*

**Alik.** — Trust me, brother! Don't worry! Go open the door quickly.

*With a serious expression on his face and insane anxiety in his heart, Sergey went to open the door. He opened it. On the doorstep stood that same drummer neighbor.*

**Neighbor.** (Confidently.) — Hi! I'm your upstairs neighbor. We were about to cook soup, but there's no salt. Help me out, give me a little if it's not too much trouble?

**Sergey.** (In a stupor.) — What?

**Neighbor.** — I said, can you give me a little salt? I'll owe you.

**Sergey.** — Huh? Salt. Yes, of course. Yes. One minute.

*Sergey slowly turned around and was about to head towards the kitchen, when suddenly he spun around sharply to the neighbor and said loudly:*

**Sergey.** — What? Give you salt? You drum every day like a madman! The noise is such that plaster falls from the ceiling! And now you come with your insolent face and ask me for salt? Are you out of your mind or something? Get out of here. And if I hear the sound of your drum one more time, I'll give you such a... such a... you'll regret moving here! Got it?

**Neighbor.** (Surprised, mouth open, eyes bulging.) — Got it.

**Sergey.** — You're dismissed!

**Neighbor.** — Will you give me the salt?

**Sergey.** — Buy salt at the store, around the corner to the left!

*(And he slammed the door shut abruptly.)*

**Alik.** (Surprised.) — Wow. Well, you're something else!

*(Sergey covered his mouth with his hands and, eyes bulging with surprise, started pacing nervously around the apartment.)*

**Alik.** — What was that, brother?

**Sergey.** (Took his hands away from his mouth, sat down nervously on the chair.) — I don't know!

**Alik.** (Shouted joyfully.) — I'm proud of you! You're a handsome man, unequivocally, yes. A handsome-ella of the highest category!

*(Sergey stood up from the chair and started pacing nervously around the apartment.)*

**Alik.** (Joyfully and emotionally.) — Vay, you. Handsome! The very best. Pride! (Makes kissing sounds.) That's what you're like! Oi, mama, no words, none of mine at all. What's happening, oh well done, brother. You said everything right! You did everything right. Well done! That's what you should have told him long ago. Well done, brother. Well done!

**Sergey.** (Pacing nervously around the apartment. Reflecting.) — That wasn't me!

**Alik.** — What do you mean, not you? Who then? Of course it was you!

**Sergey.** — No! I couldn't have said that. That was you!

**Alik.** — What? No!

**Sergey.** — Yes. It was you! How did you do that? Huh? Tell me.

**Alik.** — What are you talking about, brother? It was you. You, handsome!

**Sergey.** — This is just a nightmare! (Sat down on the bed.) No, seriously, how did you do that? How am I supposed to look him in the eye now? What if... he'll now... I'm in shock! (Gets up from the bed, pacing the apartment.)

**Alik.** — What? What are you worried about? You said everything as you should. Don't be afraid of him, he won't do anything to you.

**Sergey.** (Anxiously.) — How do you know?

**Alik.** — I know! If he wanted to do something, he would have done it right away. And if anything, call me. We'll sort it out.

**Sergey.** (Stopped in the middle of the room.) — What do you mean, call you? What are you talking about? How will you sort anything out? (Nervously.) You're just a voice.

**Alik.** — Oi, yes. I forgot! Sorry, brother. You're right. I'm just a voice. But what a voice! The way I talked to him, he won't bother you anymore! I guarantee! Oi...

**Sergey.** (Eyes bulging. Shouted nervously.) — I knew it! I knew it was you! Why did you do that? How? How did you do that?

*Pause.*

**Sergey.** — Why are you silent? (Pacing the apartment, listening.) Speak. Are you already speaking in my voice? How do you do that? Who are you? Speak.

*Pause.*

*(Sergey slowly looks around. Silence. Suddenly the smartphone rang. Sergey flinched. He walked over to the table where it lay and saw that it was the director calling. He answered the call.)*

**Sergey.** (Modestly.) — Hello!

**Director.** — Sergey, you need to come to the office urgently. The report for last month, there are many mistakes! They need to be corrected. Urgently!

**Sergey.** — But, I have a day off. I've already worked two weeks without days off. And...

**Director.** (Interrupting.) — No «ands.» Sergey, come to the office immediately! And do this work! Do you understand?

**Sergey.** — But... I have plans...

**Director.** (Raising his voice.) — What plans? Work is more important. You have to do it!

**Sergey.** (Mumbling and stuttering.) — But, but... my girlfriend is coming over.

**Director.** (Interrupting, shouting.) — What girlfriend? Immediately to the office. Come and do the report! Do you understand me?

*Pause.*

**Director.** — Do you understand me?

**Sergey.** (Silently listens and nervously thinks about what to do.)

**Director.** — Hello! Why are you silent? Can you hear me? Hello! Get to the office right now, or else...

**Sergey.** (Interrupted sharply and loudly.) — Shut up! I hear you. Now you listen to me. I worked two weeks without days off. I'm tired! And I won't work like that anymore! Listen carefully: now I will work like everyone else. From 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM and not a minute more! No overtime or extra work. You'll double my salary and make me department head. You promised me! I've been waiting for that position for three years, and you keep feeding me promises. And for all the overtime, you'll pay me in money, not your stingy «thank yous»! Keep your «thank yous» for yourself. Got it?!

And if you don't like something, do the work yourself. I've said everything! Think about it. When you've thought it over, call me back!

*(Sergey hung up the call and put the smartphone on the table. He sat down on the chair and with a serious expression stared at one point.)*

**Pause.**

**Alik.** (Surprised, admiring.) — Wow, brother, you're just... No words. My admiration and worship, yes. I applaud you standing up, brother. You're my idol! You did it! My respects to you to the skies!

**Sergey.** (Resignedly, in a quiet voice.) — This is the end! He'll fire me now. That's it!

**Alik.** — Hey, brother. Screw him. I never liked that job anyway!

**Sergey.** (Interrupting.) — What does you have to do with it? I work there. Worked. Ay, why did I say that? What now?

**Alik.** — Brother, you said it yourself. Without my help! He just got to you, that's why you couldn't take it anymore! You'll find another job. You're a specialist, damn good. You do your job, here and there, you rule. Everything will be fine, don't worry so much!

**Sergey.** (Encouraged.) — You know what... You're right! Yes. I have two higher educations. I know how to work and I love working! Yes. Screw him!

**Alik.** (Joyfully and briskly.) — Yes! Brother, you're the best!

**Sergey.** (Confidently and smiling.) — I'm the best! I can do anything!

**Alik.** — You can, brother!

**Sergey.** (Stood up from the chair, joyfully chants.) — I'll find another job, where I'll be valued and respected!

**Alik.** (Joyfully.) — You'll find it, brother! Yes! You'll definitely find it!

**Sergey.** — Tomorrow I'll post an ad. Everything will be fine! I won't be left without a job.

**Alik.** — Yes! I'm with you, brother. We'll make it!

**Sergey.** — Yes!

**Alik.** — Yes, brother!

**Sergey.** — Yes!

*(The doorbell rang.)*

**Alik.** — Vay, you scared me! Brother, who's that? Huh? (Smiling.) The neighbor, maybe? Or your director came for more, huh?

**Sergey.** (Smiling.) — I know who it is!

### Scene 3

*(Sergey went to open the door. He opened it. Alina was standing on the doorstep.)*

**Sergey.** (Smiling.) — Hello! Come in. (Fussily and excitedly.) I've been waiting for you so much!

*(Takes her purse.) Please, come in.*

**Alik.** (Admiringly.) — Vaaaaay. How beautiful she is, brother!

**Sergey.** (Through his teeth.) — Shut up! (Smiles idiotically.) Don't say anything.

**Alina.** — What?

**Sergey.** (Excitedly.) — Nothing. Come in, have a seat! (Points his hand at the chair by the table.)

**Alina.** — I'll go to the bathroom, wash my hands. After being outside, after all.

**Sergey.** (Excitedly fusses near her.) — Yes, yes, of course, go.

*(Alina left.)*

**Sergey.** (Pacing nervously around the room and through his teeth, angrily, in a low voice speaks.) — You promised you'd be quiet?! What's going on? Huh? Be quiet! I want to be alone with my girlfriend. Can you just keep quiet?

**Alik.** (Smiling.) — Brother, if you could see yourself from the outside. Pacing back and forth and talking to yourself! Quite a sight!

**Sergey.** — I'm serious. Can you be quiet? You promised! (Sat down on the chair.)

**Alik.** — I remember, brother. I remember! But...

**Sergey.** (Interrupting.) — What «but»? Well what? Don't say anything, she's coming already.

**Alik.** — I promised to be quiet. Yes. But that was before I saw her. She's magnificent, brother! Sweet as a peach-passionfruit!

**Sergey.** (Surprised.) — What? What nonsense? What peach-passionfruit? Those are two different fruits! And their tastes are different too!

**Alik.** — I know, brother! But if you combine them together. That's how sweet she is! Vay, what a woman.

**Sergey.** — What? Enough! Stop it! She's not a fruit! She's a girl. My girlfriend! Got it?

**Alik.** — Oi, mama, I'm thrilled. What a good one!

**Sergey.** — Enough, I said. Stop!

*Alina entered the room.*

**Alina.** — Stop what?

**Sergey.** (Jumped up from the chair.) — What? (Frightened.) Alina? Is that you?

**Alina.** (Smiling.) — Well, of course it's me. Who were you expecting?

**Sergey.** (Excitedly and quickly.) — I wasn't expecting anyone! Well, I mean you! Of course, you. Only you!

**Alina.** (Walked over to the chair, sat down.) — So what were you saying? What and who needs to stop?

**Sergey.** (Looks at Alina and smiles idiotically.) — What?

**Alina.** — I'm asking, to whom and what needs to be stopped?

**Sergey.** — What do you mean? When?

**Alina.** — What — when?

**Sergey.** — I don't know. You're the one talking.

**Alina.** — Me? I'm talking. You're confusing me. I asked you, to whom and what needs to be stopped? What's not clear?

**Sergey.** — Everything is clear!

**Alina.** — Well?!

**Sergey.** — What — well?

**Alina.** — Are you kidding me?

**Sergey.** — How did you guess? (Frightened.) Oi! I meant to say: what makes you think that? Yes. No, I'm not kidding, no.

**Alik.** — Vay, brother. What are you saying?

**Sergey.** — What am I saying? I'm not saying anything!

**Alina.** — What?

**Sergey.** — I'm saying... (Silent and smiling idiotically.)

*Pause.*

**Sergey.** (Smiling and looking at Alina.)

**Alina.** (Bewildered, looks at Sergey.) — What? What's wrong with you? Are you okay?

**Sergey.** (Through an idiotic smile, drawn out.) — Yeees.

**Alina.** — Are you sure?

**Sergey.** (Drawn out.) — Suuure.

**Alik.** — Brother! You're completely...

**Sergey.** (Interrupting. Loudly.) — I'm fine. Yes! I was waiting for you! I had breakfast. Got up. Woke up. Pfft. I mean, first I woke up, then I waited for you, had breakfast. Washed up. Yes! Washed up with water and waited for you. And had breakfast. Yes. And here you are. (In a low voice.) And I'm very glad to see you!

**Alina.** (Smiled.) — I'm glad to see you too. So?

**Sergey.** — What?

**Alik.** (Nervously.) — Sit down already!

**Sergey.** (Sat down abruptly on the chair.) — Yes, yes. I'm listening to you.

**Alina.** — I'm listening to you! When I came back from the bathroom, you were saying that someone needed to stop something!

**Sergey.** (As if he remembered. Loudly.) — Aaah. You mean that?

**Alina.** — Exactly.

**Sergey.** — Well, that's clear.

**Alik.** — What's clear, brother? Speak. I'm interested myself now!

**Sergey.** — I'm saying that...

**Alina.** — Well?

**Sergey.** — What — well?

**Alina.** (Nervously.) — Seryozha!

**Sergey.** — Yes, it's clear. I was just talking to myself.

**Alik.** — To me. To be precise!

**Sergey.** — Yes, to you.

**Alina.** — What — to me?

**Alik.** — Brother, pull yourself together.

**Sergey.** — I am pulled together and focused, yes.

**Alina.** — Seryozha, are you alright? You're scaring me!

**Alik.** — Me too, brother, to be honest, you're scaring me a little.

**Sergey.** — Everything is fine with me. Why be scared?

**Alina.** — What?

*Pause.*

**Sergey.** (Smiled nervously and, taking a deep breath, blurted out in one breath. Quickly.) — I love you very, very much, and that's why I'm acting like a complete idiot. I don't know how to confess my feelings to you. But now I'm confessing. Please forgive me. I love you! (Exhaled.) There!

*Pause.*

**Alik.** — Wow!

**Alina.** (Shyly smiling.) — Wow!

*Pause.*

**Alik.** (In a low voice, almost a whisper.) — Brother. Didn't expect that. Handsome!

**Sergey.** — Quiet!

**Alina.** — What?

**Sergey.** (Frightened. Nervously.) — I'm saying it's so quiet here. Maybe we should listen to music? Or a movie? Yes, a movie! We were going to watch a good movie, weren't we?! (Got up abruptly from the chair and went to the TV.)

**Alina.** — Sergey.

**Sergey.** — I'll just find the flash drive and... (Paces the room, looking for the flash drive.)  
...we'll watch a movie.

**Alina.** — Sergey!

**Sergey.** — Here, here, it was somewhere here. (Searching with his eyes.)

**Alina.** — Can you hear me? Seryozha.

**Sergey.** (Froze excitedly.) — Yes, yes, I'm listening! What happened?

**Alina.** — I love you too. Very much!

**Sergey.** — What?

**Alina.** (Shyly, in a low voice.) — I said I love you too. Very much!

**Pause.**

*(Sergey smiled, his eyes moistened and sparkled. He wiped the tears that had welled up from his eyes and walked quickly to Alina. Alina stood up from the chair. And, embracing tightly, they merged in their first kiss.)*

**Alik.** (Joyfully. Applauds.) — Handsome! Brother, well done, keep it up! Honestly, handsome!

**Pause.**

*(Sergey and Alina after the kiss stand silently for a few more minutes, embraced.)*

**Alina.** — I'm glad you were finally able to confess your feelings.

**Sergey.** (Smiling.) — You have no idea how glad I am!

**Alik.** — And I'm glad, brother!

**Alina.** — Has our relationship moved to a new level now?

**Sergey.** — Yes. I think yes. Definitely!

**Alina.** (Shyly smiling.) — And what next?

**Alik.** — Next — marriage, family, children.

**Sergey.** — Next — marriage, family, children.

**Alina.** (Surprised.) — Wow! Sergey, you're really surprising me today!

**Sergey.** (Eyes bulging with surprise that he repeated after Alik.) — Oh God!

**Alik.** — And you're surprising me too, brother. You've become so brutal! A real male, yay.  
Lead her to bed quickly.

**Sergey.** (Frightened.) — Quiet, you! What bed?

**Alina.** (Surprised.) — What bed? What are you talking about? (Took her hands away from Sergey and stepped back one step.)

**Sergey.** (Frightened. Resourcefully.) — Yes, I'm saying that we'll need to buy a bed. A new one!

**Alina.** — What? For whom?

**Sergey.** — For the children.

**Alina.** — What children?

**Pause.**

**Sergey.** — Our children, well, when we have them. When they're born! For our children. Yeah.

**Alina.** (Smiling.)

**Sergey.** — You know what prices are like these days? You need to think ahead. There!

**Alina.** (Took Sergey's hands.) — You're acting strange today.

**Alik.** — That's for sure.

**Alina.** — I like it.

**Sergey.** (Surprised.) — Yes?

**Alik.** (Joyfully. Loudly.) — Yes!

**Alina.** — Today I saw that you're serious about me! I thought we were just friends. It would be hard for me to be just friends with you.

**Sergey.** — Why?

**Alik.** — Why?

**Alina.** — Because I don't feel about you like a friend. But like a man I love!

*(They embrace.)*

**Pause.**

*(After the embrace.)*

**Sergey.** (Smiled, peacefully.) — Shall we go watch a movie?

**Alina.** (Smiled.) — Let's go.

**Alik.** — What movie? Hey. Lead her to the bedroom! Who's going to make children? Huh?

**Sergey.** — Have a seat on the couch. I'll find the flash drive with the movie.

**Alik.** (Indignantly.) — What flash drive? Deceiver. You said it yourself: family, children. Lovey-dovey. Who's going to bring you children, a stork? They have to be made. Go make them!

**Alina.** (Sat down on the couch.)

**Sergey.** — Here it is. (Found the flash drive on the nightstand. Went to the TV.) That's it. (Took the TV remote and sat down on the couch next to Alina. Put his arm around her.) Turned it on. Let's watch.

**Alik.** (Indignantly.) — Brother, hello?! Can you hear me or not?

**Sergey.** (Turned on the movie. They watch. Pulls Alina close to him.)

**Alina.** (Smiling. Snuggles up to Sergey.)

**Alik.** — Brother, it's the perfect time for love. She's ready! Don't miss the moment.

**Sergey.** — Leave me alone already. I know what to do myself. Shut up!

**Alina.** — What? Who are you talking to?

**Sergey.** (Frightened.) — Yes, got carried away watching the movie. Everything's fine. (Smiles idiotically.)

**Alina.** — Hmm. Well, okay. (Smiled.)

**Alik.** (Whispering.) — Brother, listen to me, the time for love has come. Come on! Act!

**Sergey.** (Through his teeth, whisper.) — Enough already. Be quiet for a while. We had an agreement!

**Alina.** — What's wrong with you? Who are you talking to?

*(Sergey's smartphone, lying on the table, rang.)*

**Sergey.** (Seizing the moment.) — Oh, the phone! (Gets up abruptly from the couch.)

**Alik.** — Brother, where are you going?

**Sergey.** — Quiet! (Picked up the smartphone and looked to see who was calling.) It's the director!

**Alina.** — Something important? What happened? You look terrible!

**Alik.** — Brother, answer the phone.

**Sergey.** — It's the director!

**Alina.** — Well, wonderful. Answer it. Maybe it's something important.

**Alik.** — Brother, answer it already.

**Sergey.** — He fired me. Probably.

**Alina.** — Why on earth?

**Sergey.** — Yeah... It's not something you can explain quickly. Long story.

**Alik.** — Brother, I'm with you. Answer him.

**Alina.** — Strange.

**Sergey.** — Alright. (Takes a deep breath.) Hello.

**Director.** — Hello, Sergey?

**Sergey.** — Yes. I'm listening.

**Director.** — I've thought carefully about what you told me.

**Sergey.** (Modestly, interrupting.) — Anton Pavlovich, I...

**Director.** (Interrupting.) — No, listen.

**Sergey.** — Yes, alright, sorry. Go ahead, please.

**Director.** — So. I thoroughly considered all the information I received from you.

*Pause.*

**Director.** — It was quite, unusual. And very rude of you.

**Sergey.** (Whispering, guiltily.) — Forgive me!

**Director.** — Well, yes. No one has ever spoken to me like that! It was, as I already said, very rude. But your speech, your words, reached me. I heard them! You've been working at my firm for a long time and have proven yourself to be a responsible and hardworking person. You easily handle the duties assigned to you. You're an honest person, Sergey. And you deserve to become the head of the main department. If you agree, I'm ready to offer you that position. And the salary, naturally, will be three times higher than what you have now.

**Sergey.**

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