

Ararat

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1 THE SHADOW OF A CROW LIES IN AMBUSH

Darkness. Rain. A lot of rain. Original rain. Primordial. Ancestral. Acidic. The sound of footsteps. Someone running. Moans. Someone falls on the flooded asphalt. They implore. They beg. They cry. Their tears are confused with the rain water. All mixed up. Creating a new liquid. Far more human. And far more guilty. It's forgetfulness falling. Innocence which is wiped out. They pray. They pray. They pray a lot. Pray as though it was the only thing they've ever learnt in their life. People pass by. They pass by, avoiding. Others cross the pavement. Water up to their knees. No one does anything. Darkness. Everything's dark. Impenetrably dark. A man approaches, slowly. His firm steps fighting against the overflowing water. A boy or a girl cries. They know everything. Whispers. Murmurs. Continued praying. The man comes closer. Slowly. He approaches as the world starts to pray. To pray that its sins are forgiven.

MASCULINE VOICE OF DOUBTFUL ORIGIN

Give me a reason not to. Give me one good reason why I shouldn't do it. One. Just one. One good reason why I shouldn't pull the trigger. One good reason. One. Just one, for fuck's sake! One! Please, give me a good reason so that the evil can be snuffed out of this world. Just one good reason. I'm begging you. On my knees. One good reason. Please. One. Just one. Only one. I'm imploring you. I'm urging you. Just one. Please. Please. Please!

Silence. A shot in the darkness.

2 A CONFERENCE ON THE REASONS FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

The stage is lit. The dirty bathroom of an old house. Or perhaps of a monastery. Or a simple church. Or a parish. Broken windows. Grease on the walls. Leaks. Solitude. A FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS is having a bath. His fat body's covered with soap. The water's calm. He's naked. His belly's visible above the edge of the tub. Rubber ducks float in the water. And a boat. Or, better still, an ark.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

I like little girls. I can't help it. It's my secret. We can all live with a secret. Intimate. Profound. Mine. I'm getting ready for a casual meeting in my living room with someone I know is already there. I've already made it happen. She didn't say no. She's so innocent. I'm celebrating the eve of a great day. Tomorrow is the big announcement. Who's going to go in the ark? They're going to show it all on TV. And I'm going to be the guide. And the host of the show. I've prepared my speech. I'm the director of the selection committee. My criteria are clean. Good. Virginal. I'm a man of pristine criteria. Man and woman, as god decreed, will enter the ark. Look after yourself, the unfaithful. Die, the corrupt and degenerate. Because the king of the sky isn't going to be one of them. Nor of this world. A new age is dawning. A new purity arriving in this world. God bless us. Our spirit forgets. *(He begins to forget. He really believes he's making this speech in front of a multitude).* I haven't prepared my speech properly. I ask your forgiveness. I... Couldn't sleep all night. Knowing I have to speak about something serious. I'm sorry. I'll try and keep silent for a moment or two. Don't worry. I'm just trying to find my own true voice. I can't. I don't know. I can't. I know there was something white. Something immeasurably white. A cloth. A white cloth. And a girl. Perhaps a shout. A sound of thunder. A cry of pleasure. Satisfaction. The good and the bad. The good and the bad hide themselves in equal measure in every little action of our lives. In equal measure. I feel it. A delirium. I'm someone who's suffered a lot. I know. Can you hear the rain too? The sound of one drip after another stops me sleeping. I try. But I can't. Sleep. And think. The good and the bad. In every little action of our lives. In equal measure. To change the perspective is to change the world. Or destroy it. Today I didn't see God. Today I didn't see the face of God. I walked through the streets looking at people's faces and I couldn't see God in them. What have we become? Why do I feel the profound necessity to wake up those who are already awake? Am I the one who's sleeping? That's it. I'm the one who's asleep. There's eyes spying on me, close by. I can smell their breath. There's people. People sitting in the aisles. In their comfortable seats. Their cultural seats. I didn't think this would be an attack on the aisles. It would have been better if it was an attack on culture. Why have you come to watch me suffering? If it's to appease your cultural conscience, fuck off! *(He stands up in the bath, naked.)* Now. Fuck off! You're not going to see any

theatre here, ladies and gentlemen! Not here. If you've come to digest your tea and cakes, to open sweets and criticise the bad actors, like there's always been, you can take your tea and cakes and sweets and stick them up your arses, and stick history and its absurd reasoning up your arses as well. There's a door and you can use it when you feel like it. And pay attention – don't forget that I'm not to blame for the things I say. I'm a mere actor, whose personality's got nothing to do with the things I'm saying. I'm completely not guilty. Everything I say from now on is fictional and that's how you should take it. Even if the doubt of deceit is there. Perhaps I do think what I say, or perhaps its all one big lie. The choice is up to you. Now, silence. The play's about to start. *(He falls back into the tub. The water doesn't drench everyone.)*

3 NUMBERS ARE DISTRIBUTED BY ARRIVAL. ALL COUPLES ARE REQUESTED NOT TO LOSE THEIRS. LOTS WILL BE DRAWN AT THE END OF THE DAY

A room in a profoundly Catholic motel. Sober. Strident music, perhaps electronic. SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING enters, drenched by the rain. They put down a black sock they've been using to cover their head. They look for a rag. Try to dry their face. Their sorrow. They clean their hands and the gun with which they've just killed the other man. Or woman. Or other poor animal of god. There's not much space in the ark. They play with the gun, without bullets. It doesn't seem to matter to them. No? Perhaps yes. They point. They point at us. What else?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I slept with her last night. And I couldn't remember her. It's this fucking rain. Everything's worse since the rain, you know? They've started to investigate. If anyone discovers my unfaithfulness... I'd have to come back the next night. She couldn't remember me either. I had her name written on my hand. The features of her body were the same. Just like they'd described them. I couldn't get it wrong. It was easy. It was just enough to shoot and look at the empty eyes of death. A lot of people think it's hard. That you don't forget. That the guilt never leaves you. It's none of that. It's just shoot and get out, running. I'm sure everything turned out well. Well, at least it was until I had those moments. I don't remember. This fucking rain! It's easy. Shoot and run away. And the salvation of the other side. Who wouldn't be prepared to do it to save blood being shed? It would have been simple. And still something happened.

Lights up on YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS, who's in her bed. Above her a crucifix of ice hangs on the wall. Dripping. Is Jesus within? Sorry, it's just you can't see too well from here. YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS starts to wake up. It's morning. Very early. Too early.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Is it still raining out? Today's the eve of the six hundred days. It would be a shame if it stopped now, wouldn't it? Perhaps they're having a party. Or something like that. *(Pause)* Me neck hurts. I think I've got a mark. *(She shows her neck with haematomas which she, of course, cannot see)* Is there anything? *(Pause)* SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING doesn't look at her.) You went out without telling me.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING doesn't reply. *It seems like he's forgotten about her. It seems like he can't remember who she is. Does he remember her after everything?*

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

(Almost enjoying herself. Remembering) Did we steal an umbrella yesterday in the night? *(Laughs. Pause)* Are you not going to speak to me?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I didn't want to wake you up. *(Pause. He seizes an impulse to carry on talking)*. I was observing you while you were sleeping. All night. I like watching other people sleep. So that they're at peace. I need to see others at peace. It makes me happy. That's why I don't sleep. It's simple. If I slept I wouldn't be able to watch others sleeping.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Even if they're having a nightmare?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

There's no room for real nightmares in dreams. *(Pause. His eyes become obscure again)* Are you sure we met yesterday? I feel like yesterday wasn't our first night together. *(Pause. A doubt)* I know I came to do something. But I can't remember what. *(Pause. Does he begin to remember? Perhaps he does.)* I swear that I was a good man, once.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

I don't know you but you don't seem like a bad man.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I swear that once I was one of those men without a stain on their souls. Free of guilt. Relaxed. Friendly. Carrying on my back the fierce weight of a cleanly innocence.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

What are you talking about?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

Virgin. I promise I was once light. Lucky because I was good luck. I promise I was a good man once. The kind they say: he's a good fellow.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Are you OK?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

There are things you don't know about me.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

There are things I don't know about me.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

Nothing as bad as the things which I'm trying to forget.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

What are we if we're not a tiny faction of the present between forgetting and forgetting?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

It's best if I leave.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

No. Not yet. I don't even remember your name.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

That's good.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

And if I want to come back and see you?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

You'll have to learn to live with a new frustration.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Frustration's not good.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

Frustration's necessary. That's how we build our personalities. We become strong because of the things we're denied. We owe our vision of the world to the things we don't have. To them and the fear of death. They go hand in hand. Why do we feel the need to change things? Because there's something missing. And we need that missing something to keep on going. Even if it's only in the memory of someone else. Deep down, in every little action of our lives, the fear of death is always present.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Hang on a second. *(She turns to speak to us. SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING doesn't hear her)* We met yesterday. At night. At least I think so

today. I have a feeling he's married. I didn't ask. It doesn't interest me. I'm not married. I mean, Yes, I am, but as a person, not as a character. Don't mix them up. This is theatre, although I don't really know what that means. Here, we can be unfaithful, or bigamous, and preach all kinds of shameful, humiliating immorality which anyone outside this space wouldn't hesitate to condemn. Or maybe I'm lying. It's the advantage of possessing a fictional reality, somewhere between life and deception. Of being a few letters printed on cheap paper. Only they have faith in me. I think. Like I told them, we met yesterday. It was night and he seemed much more entertaining than he does now, talking the same old rubbish. It's not his fault. I'd had a lot to drink, and it's nothing new when a few drops of alcohol in the blood do wonders to a woman's night vision, then bring sorrows in the morning. I remember that on our way here we stole an umbrella from some poor sod. *(Laughs.)* We ran away. We were escaping. I don't really know what from. Maybe the police. They were getting reorganised after the latest grand revolt. They started with the enquiries. Again. They're more and more common in recent months. They're investigating something. I don't know. The chaos in the streets and the forgetting in our memories makes everything harder. And more confused. Knowing him gives me a feeling of calmness. There's something about him – I can't stop looking at him. Something in his eyes. Something dangerous.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I've got to go.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Call me.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

No.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Will we see each other again?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING stops just before leaving.

Pause.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I know where to find you.

He leaves. Without an umbrella.

4 THE CAT AND MOUSE JOIN THE PARTY

Any street in this cursed town, falling to pieces. A broken lighthouse. A dark corner. A corner that's been saved from the flood. Rainy. Damp. PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN confesses. As he speaks 118 litres of water fall on him. In a torrent. On him. WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT watches him from afar. And listens to him.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

I don't exist. I don't remember existing. I'm only someone who's sure they're saying these words. And thus I confess. I was only looking for a little love at the corner. Nights are long in times like these. Sometimes you need a little love. L-O-V-E. I don't forget it. It's something I haven't forgotten. For now. The rain wiped out most of my memory. And affects it every day. Everyone forgets things. There's a memory-loss sickness in this city. It's the rain. The fucking rain which never stops falling. I made a note of my name in the palm of my hand. And my address. I'm sure that in a few moments I'll have forgotten them. Today I could go out into the street. Finally. My girl's sleeping at home. I've got her photo in my wallet. We're not two. We're one. She's a part of me. Two bodies united beyond distance. There's only us in the world. I can't go out with her. Not yet. Today I've gone out in the street on my own. With my umbrellas. Me and my umbrella. My UM-BREL-LA. I crossed the doorway and as I stepped on the pavement, someone, another, snatched my umbrella. My umbrella. My UM-BREL-LA. It went running off with a woman who was waiting at the end of the block. The two of them ran off together. A couple. I stayed here. Getting wet. Alone. Looking for love. Just that. And all alone I achieved the status of a 'poor sod'. It's a difficult time. It's the kind of time when they steal umbrellas. *(Long pause. He almost disappears. It's the forgetting that strikes him. Is it all a delirium or is it real, what he's seeing?)* Where am I? It's all flooded here. There's fish swimming between my legs. Two by two. In couples. I didn't know that fish swam together. Body next to body. Now not even the fish go alone. They're fleeing. Something's scared them. *(Long pause. His gestures change. Yet again the damned forgetfulness)* Where am I? It's all flooded here. What's that shout? I'm sure I heard someone shout. Someone begging god for his soul. A preacher scaring his flock. A new apocalypse in the middle of the street. In the water and the rain. A car approaching. A drowning voice. Then a body. A car going down the road. Going to a better life alerting everyone to the end of the world. A sad destination. *(Long pause. His face, look at his face. Worry. It's... they already now.)* What's this water? How did all this water get here? Where am I?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

(In the distance. Her attitude is defiant. To the public?) These are hard times. It's more than four years that nothing but rain has fallen from the sky. Rain. Only rain. Tomorrow it will be six hundred days. Everyone runs, directionless, on the pavements. What used to be pavements. Heads down. Some stop. Raise their eyes. Let their hair get wet. Try to wipe out part of their memory. But the rain's here to make us remember. To make us remember that we were wrong.

The water falling on the body of PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN stops.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
(Comes closer) Are you waiting for anyone?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
No. I don't know. Perhaps. Yes. For you. I think.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
Do we know each other? You look familiar.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
No. I don't think so. It's been a long time since I left the house. It's safer inside.
(Pause) Today, something was different. I came out because... I just wanted to meet someone. Whoever. Someone with the ability of speech, or oral communication. Someone capable of entering the other in spite of their humanity. To find a response. I don't know. Something. I think. I'm not sure.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
Did you say 'oral'. Enter in the other? What you're looking for is someone who can enter you. You want to be entered. In all your depth. I can see. It happens, sometimes.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
(Interrupts her) No – no. Not that. I don't think so. I wasn't meaning that. Obviously not. I think. I mean... I don't know. *(Long pause. Forgetfulness in his eyes.)* Where am I? It's all flooded here. Was I saying something? I'm dizzy. I'm going to faint.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
You were telling me you wanted me to give it to you up the arse.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
What? Did I say that? I don't think so. I don't think that's appropriate. I'd never have imagined that. Are you sure that's what I said?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
Totally sure.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
Can't be.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
Yes it can.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
Up the arse?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
Up the arse.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
Really?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
Up to the hilt.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
That's all?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
Doesn't seem a lot to you?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
(A doubt) I don't understand. (More doubt. But trusts. What a shame. He's the one that trusts...) So... Perhaps I did say it. I can't remember. And I said? (Long pause. He's forgotten everything again.) Do we know one another?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
(With a does of wickedness) Don't you remember?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
I don't remember anything.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
(Innocent. Almost angelic.) My love. Don't you remember me. (How does he fail to realise? The deception is obvious from here on.)

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

My love?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

Are you OK, darling?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

Maybe we're –

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

God! What's happened to your memory? Our memories? We are our memories, my love. Without memories, we're nothing. You're not doing anything, darling. *(Pause.)* Give me your wallet.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

What for?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

To show you the photo of your little girl, my love.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

We've got a little girl?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

She's so pretty. Absolutely pretty.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

I don't remember her.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

That's very sad.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

I don't remember anything.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

Don't worry. You were lucky. I'm here. TO look after you. Today, I'm your guardian angel. Your guardian angel. *(Pause)* Today, I'll be your memory. Relax. Nothing bad's going to happen. Trust me. Give me your hand. The comings and going of chance are obvious in the lines in your hands. Give me your hand. I promise that you'll see it there, everything's going to be fine. *(PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN gives her his hand. And she leads the way to her house.)*

5 SAD BODIES OF DOVES LACKING OLIVE BRANCHES SCATTERED IN THE STREETS FLOODED WITH THE WATER OF FORGETFULNESS

The dark corner of a living room without any windows. A fat-walled apartment. Greys. Silences. A contaminated atmosphere. The light scent of a corpse. Condom boxes thrown on the floor. Vibrators. Leather underwear hanging from the walls. WANDERING GIRL holds an INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH in her arms. They are both remarkably similar. Perhaps twins. Their voices sound the same? Perhaps the voice of the girl ringing across the doll's. Or better, vice versa.

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH

Sometimes I wish that the milky way fell on my head. Have you never dreamed of dying drowned by thousands of litres of universal milk. Sometimes I think I'm too much of a little girl for so much world. For so much sky. For this dream that falls from above. Its easier like this than having it big and far away. A wall separates me from the rest of the world. From people. I just want to shut my eyes tight, then open them and not be here. It would have been so easy to be a fighting bear. Who hurts a fighting bear?

WANDERING GIRL

I think I love you.

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH

No one lies on top of a fighting bear to rape it over and over. An abuse of silence more than the body. We can't speak. They know it. That's why they do it to us. Otherwise they wouldn't do it. That's what I think.

WANDERING GIRL

Are you listening to me? I said I love you.

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH

I wasn't expecting to meet you here again. How did you get here?

WANDERING GIRL

I know all the corners of the houses in this city. I choose which ones to enter. Like the angels. I'm an angel. You know? It was open. I sensed your smell and I entered.

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH

I don't like that you've come when he's not here. It's for the best if you leave.

WANDERING GIRL

Answer me first. Would you come with me if they call us? If they decide we're the perfect couple, if they see us as a single body, if they believe we might die if we're separated, if they threaten to chop up our bodies, limb by limb, just to push us apart, if we demonstrated our love by eating each other's severed limbs, then, would you go with me?

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH

We scarcely know each other.

WANDERING GIRL

I've been watching you. I know that you look at me when I bend over ????. Or when I undress. Or when a man grunts on top of you and you GUINAS an eye over his shoulder. And in those moments I can almost make out a tear on your cheek.

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH

That doesn't mean anything.

WANDERING GIRL

It means you care for me too.

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH

It means I get sad in those moments. Nothing else.

WANDERING GIRL

And why do you do it?

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH

I was born for this. No one can go against their true nature.

WANDERING GIRL

I don't want to be alone. Sometimes it tires me. And I feel like I can't go on.

Pause

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH

It's still raining outside.

WANDERING GIRL

You're lucky. You'll float. *(Pause)* Do I have to go?

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH

He's coming. I know.

WANDERING GIRL
Come with me.

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH
He'd be left alone.

WANDERING GIRL
So what? We could leave him and run away together. What do you think?

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH
It's not that easy, my little girl.

WANDERING GIRL
Don't call me 'girl'. I prefer 'my love'. I heard there's not much time left. Perhaps tomorrow. You have to decide quickly. They're going to do tests. If we stay outside, we'll drown.

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH
Get off me.

WANDERING GIRL
You and me. Together. What do you say? *(Slowly starts to raise the doll's skirt.)*

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH
I'll miss him.

WANDERING GIRL
You can't be sure. *(Slowly starts to stroke the doll.)*

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH
There's no one like him. The poor thing. It's best if you go. Poor thing.

WANDERING GIRL
I don't want to go down on my own. Not with this rain. Come with me. *(She carries on tenderly stroking the doll.)* Please?

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH
(Almost moaning. Moaning in spite of herself.) It'll be best if you leave.

WANDERING GIRL

(Without stopping touching her) We could be best friends forever. What do you think. You and me together. Forever. What do you think?

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH
(Without resistance) Get off me. He's going to come.

WANDERING GIRL
(Still touching her) It's not that hard. All you have to do is say yes.

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH
(Almost not wanting her to stop) He's not going to like this. He's going to notice. My little girl...

WANDERING GIRL
(Stops abruptly) I'm not a girl. I'm already dead. Can't you tell? Can't you see I'm pale and alone? Can't you see my eyes? My wet dress? My blue hands?

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH
I...

WANDERING GIRL
It's OK. It doesn't matter. Today I'm going to see someone.

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH
Be careful.

WANDERING GIRL
(Smiling) I've already died being a girl. I can't die twice.

6 THE BLACK WIDOW AND A FLAWED DECEIT

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING is making love to YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS. A hotel room. The same as in scene 2. Dealing with a memory. Everything is bathed in an atmosphere of memory. The scene shows the night before Scene 2. They're talking happily. Without any concerns. As though they weren't really listening to what they were saying. Like two happy drunks enjoying a foreign body in the gloom. Beneath a crucifix made of ice and the smell of alcohol. Without stopping making love until the end of the scene.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I've just killed someone.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS doesn't answer. She hasn't taken him seriously.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I said I've just killed someone.

Pause

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

(Laughing) It was a woman. Like you. A whore. We fucked. I'm married. You know I'm married. I felt guilty and I killed her. *(Laughs)*

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS laughs too.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

Doesn't it matter to you? I said –

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

(Interrupting him) Yes. And? Are you going to kill me?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

Is that what you want?

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Do you want to?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

Maybe. In one way I'm already doing it. The French call the orgasm the little death.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Don't get ahead of yourself. That's not about to happen.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I've got to confess something to you.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

You've fallen in love with me?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

We live in a world without laws, you know? There's nothing but water in the prisons. A the bodies of the ones who couldn't escape floating between the bars. Caught in their prisoner disguises. The police stations are empty. People use them to sleep in. I spent a night in one once. It was full of men looking for shelter from the rain.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Is that what you wanted to tell me?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

No. I wanted to say that if I killed you now, it wouldn't matter to anyone.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

It would matter to me.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I'm talking about the others. The ones who are out there. They don't want to know about these things. They want to keep everything ordered, they say. If another whore gets killed, no one's interested. Out there the whore hunt is getting started. I'd be doing society a favour. They'd give me a medal if I strangled you right now. Or if I beat you up so much it disfigured your face.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Thankfully tomorrow when we get up neither of us will remember anything.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

What are you talking about?

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Nothing. A secret. A defence mechanism. Like porcupine needles.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I know I have to kill you. I don't want them to report it. They're following me. For days. I can hear them close by. See their shadows.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

At least wait until dawn. No one wants to die at night.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

Sorry. No one can go against their natures. Even if we don't do anything more than nearly kill ourselves every time we are ourselves. Es the paradox of the honest. Fuck and kill trying. Go out silently into the street. So that no one reports. Forget the evidence if possible. If not, stay silent forever. Tomorrow's the day. I can't go home smelling of strangers.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

And if it was me who you just killed? And if even know you were killing without realising it? Let's suppose that this isn't our first meeting. We fucked. You left. And I'm looking for revenge. I come across you in a café. You don't remember me. We have fun in the night. I bring you to a hotel to escape the rain. And I deceive you. Without you realising it. And the following morning when dawn breaks you're dead. What do you think?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

(Carrying on making love. He laughs. She doesn't.) So let's see who's still alive in the morning. We're animals in wartime. Don't forget it.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

I don't. I'm not going to forget that.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

It's easy. The place that you fill will be free for me. It's like that with everyone. Nothing personal. *(Stops smiling. Slowly)*

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

I know. That's the rules of the game.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

(He starts to strangle her without stopping making love.) Sorry. Forgive me. I promise it's nothing personal.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

(Without resisting, even smiling a little. Her moans are more and more faltering)
It's OK. Tomorrow I won't remember anything. You neither.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING
Let's hope that for once we'll be able to forget.

He stops strangling her as both reach orgasm.

7 DON'T CAST OUT THE DEAD MEAT OF THE CONQUERED

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS is still in the bath. He's taken out the plug and the level of the water has started to drop. The rubber arc drops along with the water. He starts to clean his skin.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

It's not dignified to receive visitors when you're dirty. Carrying the impurities of the street on your body. *(He starts to scrub himself with a sponge)* When two people are going to get to know one another, the body has to be purified. And the soul. Few things clean the soul like blood. If you see blood coming out of my body, don't get scared. Everything's going to be fine. *(Starts scrubbing harder and harder. The skin of his belly starts to redden.)* Cleanliness is the modern saints' aura. There's few that smell as good as a saint. I'm a saint. My mission is to save the world. And in order to do this my skin has to lose any part that isn't holy. *(He scrubs frenetically)* The cross and the soap go hand in hand in these dark days. It's still raining outside. Do they know? I've already lost count of the days. Tomorrow is the grand announcement. Perhaps no one can save themselves. It's time to seek a personal redemption. Nothing like finding a soul mate in times of crisis. The salvation in the touch of two pure skins. Nothing else. *(His flesh can't take it anymore. It starts to crumple???)* The days of Saint John of the Hospitaliers lay behind us. No one would kiss the wounds of a leper nor even the self-same Jesus Christ converted into a living scar. ?????They wouldn't mix it with my saliva or the green pustules of his limbs, or the scabs made greasy with blood. *(He carries on scrubbing himself more and more violently. It's almost unbearable)* Nor the nauseating smell of an infected breath, not the vomit stored in the throat, nor the lips injured through miscare, nor the rotting ulcers in a decomposing body, none of that it the white times, transparent. *(He hasn't stopped scrubbing)* A little more. Just a little more. A little more. *(He starts to stop. Bit by bit. He cries. Cries? Yes, he's started to cry. I can see him clearly from here. He knows it's impossible.)* I can't. I try day after day. But it's impossible. I am I. And I'm filthy for being so. I... *(He doubts. He doesn't know what to say.)* I... *(The light goes down, bit by bit)* I... I... I... I... I... *(The light disappears completely)*

8 AN ANIMAL SMELL IN THE AIR

A white room. Candles and white muslins. Candelabra. White portraits of white souls. MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS takes pills, seated in the shadows. She counts them. There aren't many. Will she finish them? She listens to a recording of her last session with a therapist. It was just before the rain started. It's not the first time she's done this. She cries. She cries slowly. Almost silently. At heart a nursery rhyme. WANDERING GIRL dances naked in a corner. Her clothes thrown on the floor. White.

VOICE OF MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS ON THE TAPE RECORDER

My daughter is beautiful. Prudently beautiful. I say her name and she holds up her hand. I whisper and she comes running. She stumbles. Falls to the floor. And smiles. Because she's happy. She's a poor angel of the lord. I go out in the street and I walk with her. Hold her hand. The men can't hide their enthusiasm. They turn round. Look at her slowly. Her eyes. Her arms. Her legs. Her legs, which aren't the legs of a girl. They dry her sweat on hot days. Take out a handkerchief and come to dry her. Her forehead. Her back. Her legs. Her legs which aren't the legs of a girl. She smiles, looking straight ahead. She guesses their thoughts. She raises her skirt. Walks naked in the street. In the heat of the city and beneath the rain of the lord. The men howl excitedly. Poor things, they're like wolves. She's happy. She is a happy angel. Smiles and enters the men's house. They welcome her in. She smiles. I never had this kind of luck. I can't sleep if she's here. At home. With me. She cries. She wants to go to other homes. With them. Only with them. Some nights I open the door for her. She smiles. She goes off smiling. She goes to their houses. Smiling. To lose herself in the men's corners. Dressed in white. Pure. Innocent. (*MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS rewinds the tape and listens to the last three phrases until they tire her out. Her and the audience. Then she goes on listening.*) Whenever she comes back she reeks of a dreadful animal smell. (*Pause. Still the voice on the tape.*) Has it started raining outside?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING enters, his clothes bloodied and carrying an umbrella. He's killed again. Who? Why? MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS stops the tape. It carries on raining outside. More and more violently. SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING picks up WANDERING GIRL'S white dress with his bloody hand and covers her with her. The nursery rhyme hasn't stopped.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

Tomorrow it will be one thousand six hundred days without any sessions. (*Pause*) Did you bring the pills? One thousand six hundred days without sleep. One thousand six hundred days. One thousand six hundred nights. One

thousand six hundred. Forty times forty days. Forty times forty nights. Four years, four months and nineteen days without sleep. Someone doesn't love us. Someone doesn't love us and is doing this to us. I've forgotten what it is to dream. To sleep you have to remember the dream. You have to remember what it was like to dream. It's like flying. To fly you have to remember how to do it. And we've forgotten. That's why we don't fly. If I flew I'd fly in white. With a white cloth. Like my daughter. White. All in white. I was waiting for you. Awake all night. Awake for you.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I think I made love with another woman.

Pause. MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS seems not to have heard him. But she has. The nursery rhyme has stopped.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

Again?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I was scared.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

If they find out we're going to lose our place.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I don't know how but from one moment to the next we were fucking.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

(For WANDERING GIRL) I don't like you talking like this in front of the girl. She doesn't know about these things yet.

Pause

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I was scared.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

You went to kill her and you slept with her. Giving her smack should have been enough. Not screwing her.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

How do you know I didn't do both?

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

Did you?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING doesn't answer. He wants to speak about something else. Anything else. Something beautiful.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I wish I could see you sleep again. I need to see you sleep.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

Is that her blood?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

And if it's someone else's, what's the difference?

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

That changes things.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

It doesn't change anything.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

And that umbrella?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

Someone stole my umbrella when I left here. And I robbed someone else's.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

You didn't have an umbrella when you left.

Pause. SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING begins to doubt, like we all do sometimes.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

Are you sure?

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

It's been four years since I slept. I'm not sure about anything.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I know I left with an umbrella.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

That doesn't change things.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

It changes everything. *(He's still in doubt. He searches inside his mind.)* The night. The rain. Was it me who was running? Or was I just looking from the corner? I can't remember anything. This fucking rain.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

Have you brought the pills?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

What are you talking about?

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

It's been more than four years since I managed to sleep. *(Pause. Thinks. Had an ingenious thought.)* Or perhaps I never woke up, and you're part of my dream. *(Laughs. Laughs as though she really believes it.)*

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

The chemist. I went by the chemists. I stole an umbrella and I went past the chemist.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

You went past a chemist and you didn't bring my pills.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I think so.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

I can't sleep without my pills.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

You can't sleep anyway.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

How was it?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

The chemists?

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

The woman.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I don't know.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

You don't remember anything?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I don't know. Something hit me. I'm sure that woman hit me. I stole an umbrella and went to a motel. Where I met her. I had to meet up with her. I know that. No, we met before. We arrived together. In the night. I arrived with her. Yes. Maybe. No. It wasn't night. I remember it was raining. I definitely remember that. She seemed to recognise me. I... I... I had a name written on my hand. (He looks at his hand. I think there's a name written there, I can't see all that well from here. His face is one of someone whose memory has been stolen. His memories. Everything.)

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

(There's some fear in her look. But only some.) Who did you kill?

Pause. WANDERING GIRL watches from a distance. She knows everything. It's as though she's watching TV. Perhaps she believes that everything is from a TV program. Perhaps not. These are hard times. She knows everything. But immediately forgets.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I can't remember.

9 A TALE TOLD BACKWARDS AND A SAND CLOCK

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS in the same motel room as the previous scene. Important note: she's alive. Profoundly alive. Curled up in the bed. Almost like a saint. In the unmade sheets. White? Behind her back a crucifix carries on dripping.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Men don't remember me. I possess the strange quality of being completely forgettable. It's contagious. The memory gaps, I mean. I suffer them as well, of course. One day I went to bed with a man who was suffering from forgetfulness. The next morning I'd been infected. I couldn't remember how I'd arrived in his bed. From then on I lose my memory every night. It's entertaining trying to remember what happened between recollection and recollection. Sometimes I invent absurd stories which reconstruct the path I took between two forgettings. That's more entertaining than going along with the crazy idea that there's some kind of order in the universe. And that everything happens for a reason. For something else. (Pause) Though sometimes it makes me scared. And I cry. And make a note of one more in my list of homemade deaths.

10 THE ARK AND A NAIL TO SAVE THE WORLD

A giant screen in some corner of the stage. Or above the audience's head. Or perhaps behind them. Various actors have come on stage to watch. Five. Four. Three. Two. One. Lights Out. Darkness. Music. A voice on the loudspeaker. His speaking voice is reminiscent of a North American army recruiter from the second world war. It has a slight English accent. Optimistic, heroic, and unrestrainedly patriotic.

EXTREMELY MASCULINE VOICE ON THE LOUDSPEAKER

An unnamed President in an unnamed country today smiled happily. As we all should do. This isn't a marketing policy. We're talking about the end of the world. These are difficult times. They know we're doing whatever we can to save ourselves. This is not a game. The ark has begun to be built. The third alliance already has a place in the world. Not in the kingdom of heaven. They're looking into that. With due diligence. The Directors of the ten most important multinationals in the world, together with the presidents of the eight richest and most influential countries in the world, have sealed their commitment with a warm hug. Their photos are displayed across the world. The name of our great benefactors cannot be revealed in public for security reasons. Suffice to say they're good men. With no stains on their souls. Pure. They do good in every tiny action in their lives. Their motives are entirely altruistic. Entirely altruistic. They pay close attention. With due diligence. This isn't marketing speak. Or an advertising campaign. Or a sales strategy. Even if it looks like all those things. The ark has begun to be built. It's destination: Ararat.

Lights up. A film from the start of the 20th Century. In black and white. In the original language, subtitled. Big Russians, wearing Russian overalls, speaking in Russian, building an ark to save the world. Or something like that. Nothing in the film is very clear. Perhaps it's a part of Battleship Potemkin, whose subtitles have been switched. Better still, without subtitles. The images come fast and furious. Giant cauldrons. Smoking chimneys. Completely mechanised farms. Steam. Dormitories full of sleeping Russians. The sea. The hundred and ninety steps of the Odessa Steps. Three seamen on deck: IVAN, PIOTR, and PAVEL.

IVAN

We've got to leave some space for advertising, Piotr.

PIOTR

The railings on the foredeck will do the job. That's where the cameras will be, Ivan.

PAVEL

What's left now to save humanity, Piotr?

PIOTR

A nail.

IVAN

A nail, Piotr?

PIOTR

A nail, Ivan.

PAVEL

There aren't any more nails, Piotr.

Pause. Close up on Piotr's face. Expressionist despair in his gaze. His eyes bulging out of their sockets.

PIOTR

Call everyone. Sound the alarm. Emergency. Emergency. Everyone look for a nail immediately. It's our mission to save the world.

They search. As they do so things become more and more animated. Noise and movement in the Ark. Energetic discussions. Piotr, Pavel and Ivan are picked out.

PAVEL

We have to be united. One for all. And all for a nail.

IVAN

We've been chosen.

PIOTR

Yes.

PAVEL

Yes.

IVAN

Yes.

PAVEL

You're either with us. Or against us.

The agitated search stops in the film. Now there's an interview with PIOTR, already an old man, talking to a journalist. Like a TV set prepared for a documentary. Now in colour. The quality of the image, along with the haircuts and the clothes, are typical of the seventies. They're still talking Russian. Their words subtitled.

PIOTR

(Relaxed, looking back with nostalgia.) At the beginning we didn't understand what it was all about. We had been sent to the city of Odessa without any explanation. We were given orders. We obeyed. Something about an enemy. An invisible enemy. It's not like before, they told us. You won't see the eyes of the evil enemy, you'll only see rain. This time, the evil comes from the skies. It's nowhere to be found. And it's everywhere at the same time. Like the air. Like God.

Fragments from more interviews follow. It's Pavel's turn. He's also old.

PAVEL

We obeyed. And when we could, we took photos.

Interview with Ivan, as old as the others.

IVAN

(With a flicker of a smile) We liked taking photos.

PAVEL

I remember the moment vividly. The rain didn't bother us. We were trained for that. We were looking for a nail. Our lives depended on it.

IVAN

(Remembering with some anxiety) Our nail-searching machine wasn't working. It had run out of batteries.

PAVEL

There's machines for everything.

PIOTR

Including killing.

IVAN

But there's not that many for nail-searching.

PAVEL

And our lives depended on a nail.

PIOTR

They were anxious moments.

The black and white film cuts back in. The search is still going on. Upheaval in the ark. SKOLKO VREMENI, a wayward priest appears. He has a crucifix in his hand.

SKOLKO VREMENI

For a lack of nails you can use this crucifix. God is with us.

Back to an interview fragment.

IVAN

And I thought that it was God who'd sent the rain, I told him. It was the priest, Skolko Vremeni. Every time we saw him we remembered it was time to change things.¹

PIOTR

The priest Skolko Vremeni (*the name provokes a little smile*) was there to choose who was to travel. The church didn't allow any old type of couple. Only those established couples who conformed to the rules.

PAVEL

They chose couples who's love had been proved. To be absolutely faithful.

More images of the modern Ark. The film begins to burn out. It cuts off. The actors who'd been watching start to scoff, disappointed.

¹ Ivan's making a small pun: "Skolko vremeni" means 'what time is it' in Russian.

11 THE EFFECT OF A BLACK HOLE AND THE SAME ANIMAL SMELL IN THE AIR.

A white room. Candles and white cloths. Candelabras. White portraits of white beings. MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS is taking pills, seated in the shadows. She counts them. There aren't many. Should she finish them? She listens to a recording of her last session with a therapist. It was just before the rain started. It's not the first time she's done this. She cries. She cries slowly. Almost silently. At heart a nursery rhyme. WANDERING GIRL dances naked in a corner. Her clothes thrown on the floor. White.

VOICE OF MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS ON THE TAPE RECORDER

My daughter is beautiful. Prudently beautiful. I say her name and she holds up her hand. I whisper and she comes running. She stumbles. Falls to the floor. And smiles. Because she's happy. She's a poor angel of the lord. I go out in the street and I walk with her. Hold her hand. The men can't hide their enthusiasm. They turn round. Look at her slowly. Her eyes. Her arms. Her legs. Her legs, which aren't the legs of a girl. They dry her sweat on hot days. Take out a handkerchief and come to dry her. Her forehead. Her back. Her legs. Her legs which aren't the legs of a girl. She smiles, looking straight ahead. She guesses their thoughts. She raises her skirt. Walks naked in the street. In the heat of the city and beneath the rain of the lord. The men howl excitedly. Poor things, they're like wolves. She's happy. She is a happy angel. Smiles and enters the men's house. They welcome her in. She smiles. I never had this kind of luck. I can't sleep if she's here. At home. With me. She cries. She wants to go to other homes. With them. Only with them. Some nights I open the door for her. She smiles. She goes off smiling. She goes to their houses. Smiling. To lose herself in the men's corners. Dressed in white. Pure. Innocent. (*MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS rewinds the tape and listens to the last three phrases until they tire her out. Her and the audience. Then she goes on listening.*) Whenever she comes back she reeks of a dreadful animal smell. (*Pause. Still the voice on the tape.*) Has it started raining outside?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING enters, his clothes unbloodied. Without an umbrella. He's carrying a packet of pills in his hand. MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS stops the tape. It's still raining outside. More and more heavily. With his clean hands, SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING picks up the white dress of the WANDERING GIRL and covers her. You can see spots of blood on the dress. He doesn't understand. He doesn't remember anything, the poor thing... The lullaby hasn't stopped.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

Tomorrow it will be one thousand six hundred days without a session. (Pause) Did you bring the pills? One thousand six hundred days without sleep. One thousand six hundred days. One thousand six hundred nights. One thousand six hundred. Forty time forty days. Forty times forty nights. Four years, four months and nineteen days without sleep. Someone doesn't love us. Someone doesn't love us and is doing this to us. I've forgotten what it means to dream. To sleep, you need to remember how to dream. It's like flying. In order to fly you've got to remember how to do it. And we've forgotten. That's why we don't fly anymore. If I flew, I'd fly dressed in white. With a white cloth. Like my girl. White. All white. I was waiting for you. Awake all night. Awake for you.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I killed someone.

Pause. MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS seems not to have heard. But she has. The lullaby has stopped playing.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

You didn't have to.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

Wasn't that what you asked me to do?

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

I haven't slept in one thousand six hundred nights. I don't know what I asked you.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I don't regret it. I know I don't regret it.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

And the umbrella?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

What umbrella?

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

You went out with an umbrella.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING has his doubts.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

Where did you leave it?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I don't remember.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

Was it before or after?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

After what?

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

Going to the chemists. To buy the pills.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING suddenly realises that he was always carrying a packet of pills in his hand.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I don't remember going to the chemist's.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS takes the pills and starts to take them.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

You're putting us in danger. You're putting her in danger. If they find the umbrella... In the room? Think: Did you leave it in the hotel room?

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I came running. I ran. Because of the rain. I passed a couple who'd stolen some poor sod's umbrella. I remember that a fat man said something to a girl on a corner, inviting her into home. It's all too confusing.

MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS

Nothing's confusing. It's simple. It's all very simple. It just needs a change of perspective. She was just a whore. Big deal. We have to redeem ourselves. If not, who's going to love us on the inside? (Pause) Tell me, how do you kill her?

Pause. The WANDERING GIRL looks into the distance. She knows everything. She watches a lot of television. Perhaps she thinks all this is part of a TV show. Perhaps not. These are hard times. She knows everything. But she forgets straightaway.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

I didn't kill anyone.

12 SOMETIMES VULTURES FEED ON WHORES

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS is in her bed. In the same hotel room as the previous scene. Important note: she's dead. Profoundly and obviously dead. Her twisted body caught up in sheets stained red. On the wall behind her the crucifix is still dripping.

13 RUSSIAN ROULETTE IN THE DEN

A dark corner of a living room with no windows. As in scene five. An apartment with thick walls. Greys. Silences. Feels contaminated. Faint scent of a corpse. Condom boxes scattered on the floor. Vibrators. Leather underwear hanging from the walls. PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN sits on the floor and embraces INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH. Leaning against a wall. His position reminiscent of The WANDERING GIRL's in the fifth scene. He has a revolver which is pointed at WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT without yet having decided whether to shoot or not. And perhaps he never will. She looks into the distance. Through the doorway. Her shadow is cast on the floor. She's been here a while. Her face expresses surprise. And some fear. A streak of light comes through the door. It lights up the scared face of PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN as he holds the weapon.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

I don't like you lying to me. It's not fair to take advantage of someone who's forgotten. At the end of the day it's not my fault. It's the water. It comes back stronger every time we forget it's here. Come in and shut the door.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

I'd rather stay outside. There's a terrible smell in here.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

It's the old tenants. They're dead. They already were when I got here. I didn't want to take them out. They could be good for something when there's nothing left. The water's up to our waist. And no-one seems to be bothered. Soon there won't be any water left to drink. Or food. Then we'll start to eat each other. That'll be the end of any kind of justice. The difficulty with a human body is that it's hard to divide it up into equal parts. We'll buy axes and take them to pieces bit by bit. And any kind of distribution will be done according to unforeseen laws of injustice. It's simple. Who would you choose to save in a choice between you and me?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

I've got nowhere to go. I'd like to stay.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

At your own risk.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

I thought I was the bad one.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

In times like there there's no good guys or baddies. We're all animals.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

Now you remember everything.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

I don't remember forgetting.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

I suppose forgetting is temporary.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

Not always.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

You coming here was an act of deceit. Do you remember that?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

And if it was you, not me, who deceived you so that you came here with me?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

I don't believe that. I'm not that stupid.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

No-one's that stupid in the rainy season.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

Your daughter?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

You're referring to her?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

That's your little girl?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

She, not it. She's my guardian angel.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

It's an inflatable doll.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

All you have to do is change your perspective. It's not her. It's us who decide whether she's alive or not. She can hear me if I decide she can hear me.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

Are you going to let me stay?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

I never take a decision on my own. We're always two. It's a shame. She's sleeping right now.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

Sleeping? Her eyes are open. Not to mention her mouth.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

She's pretending to be awake. She says she does it so I don't feel alone. But I know she does it to look after me. You and me wouldn't make a very good couple, you know? Wasn't that what you told me in the street? Come in and shut the door.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

I'm not sure.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

Come in and shut the door!

Pause. WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT comes in. Both are almost entirely in darkness.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

That smell is unbearable.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

If I open the windows the water gets in. We don't want to flood the house do we? *(Smiles and raises the pistol, thinking about Russian roulette)* Are you playing?

14 THE INTERROGATION OF NOAH

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS and WANDERING GIRL. He's all dressed up. She's not. She's wearing nothing more than a white cloth. The bathroom. In his eyes is a fear of the obscene. In hers the desire for revenge. She's placed a table over the bath. And plates on the table. And candles. Some candelabras. Supper for two. Both are sat on the edge of the empty bath, their feet inside it. They've just finished eating.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

See? This is my favourite room. Here I cleanse my guilt. Here I can think. I think a lot.

WANDERING GIRL

My father says thinking too much gives you cancer.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

What are you hoping for?

WANDERING GIRL

From what?

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

From this.

WANDERING GIRL

This?

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

This visit.

WANDERING GIRL

I don't think. Thinking tires me out. That's what my father says. Sometimes it's tiring to think. My mother and him get tired thinking. That's why I don't think. I watch television.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

I always wanted a daughter. Beautiful. A bit like you.

WANDERING GIRL

Can I dance?

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

Of course.

WANDERING GIRL

Later. Not now.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

As you wish. Do you like dancing?

WANDERING GIRL nods that she does.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

Me too. And I dance really well. *(Pause)* Orange juice?

WANDERING GIRL nods her assent. FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS pours her some orange juice. He fills the glass. Up to the brim. She doesn't drink. All on its own, the tabletop removes itself. Now they're separated by nothing but air.

WANDERING GIRL

Have you seen my doll?

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS looks surprised by the question.

WANDERING GIRL

I've been looking for it everywhere. I know a man took her but I don't know where. I can't live without her. Did you take her?

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

I'm afraid not, lovely. What was she like?

WANDERING GIRL

Very like me. Only she doesn't speak as much.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

I'm sure she's a beautiful doll. Aren't you cold? Come a bit closer.

WANDERING GIRL

I can see you better from here. You're very big. If I come closer I'll only see you in bits. And I don't want to do that. *(Pause)* My mother takes pills to help her sleep.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

That's not good. Pills wear the mind out. Like disturbing thoughts. That's why it's good to be good. Come closer.

WANDERING GIRL

Am I good?

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

You couldn't be anything else.

WANDERING GIRL

And you?

Pause

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

I'm the best man in the world.

15 THE ORDEAL

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN and WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT together. Dancing. He's still got a gun in his hand. They've been drinking. INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH is looking on from a distance. There's jealousy in her eyes.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
Have you seen the news?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
The lights have been out for days.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
They're recruiting couples. You have to fill in some forms. It would make sense if we got to know each other a bit better. What's your name?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
Choose one you like. I don't have any documents.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
Magdalena.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT smiles.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
I like it.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
Age?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
How old do you think?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
Younger than you look.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
You're very kind.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
You're not going to tell me.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
I'm keeping it secret.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
It's not good to have secrets.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
We all need secrets. We are who we are thanks to our secrets. Others hear what we decide to tell them. But it's what we don't say that reveals our true nature. We're animals in wartime. Don't forget it.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
I never forget it.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
And you?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
Me what?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
Do you have secrets?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
No.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
It's not good to lie either.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
I'm not lying.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
Nothing. Nothing that you regret?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
I'm guilt free.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
Great. If you're guilt free then so am I.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

It's not that simple.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

Why not?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

It's not enough just to say it. It has to be really true.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

It's impossible to prove I'm lying.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

Nothing's impossible. *(Pause. He looks at her with fake malice)* Do you know what ordeal means?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

(Laughing) A type of flower?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

The judgement of God.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

What are you talking about?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

Only God knows the truth. Justice has nothing to do with man. So they say. Centuries ago when a man was accused of something he was subjected to a test. Some had to grasp a red hot iron. Or walk barefoot across sharpened ploughshares. Or pick up an object immersed in boiling water. If the suspect emerged unharmed, it was because God testified to his innocence. Others were thrown into water. The ones who floated were innocent. The water does not admit the guilty. So they say. The water only receives the innocent. So they say. *(Holds the gun out)* Take it.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

What are you doing?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

Let's play.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT

I don't follow.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
Let's prove our innocence.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
I don't want to.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
It's for the best if you leave.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
No. Please. I don't want to be out there again. Not again. It's always worse going back.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
(Holding out the gun again) So take it. It won't last long. If God loves you you'll stay with me.

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT
Crazy.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
And what's normal nowadays?

WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT takes the gun. Timidly.

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN
Don't worry. It won't take long.

16 TOWARDS A PREVENTIVE HUNT

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING looks at MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS who's lying on the floor. She's sleeping at long last. The sound of a shot from the scene before has rung out. I'm not wrong. Everyone could hear it from here. It's created a strange time-space edit between the two scenes. And we're closing in on the conclusion of the story.

SOMEONE FIGHTING AGAINST FORGETTING

(for MOTHER WITHOUT PILLS) She could scarcely hear the shot. She lay down on the floor and slept. After four years, four months, and nineteen days I saw her dream. (He goes to her side. Watches her. He's happy.) Perhaps it was obvious. Perhaps I didn't kill anyone. Perhaps I did. Just to be with her. Forever. A mistake lasts as long as a night. Do they know that? Perhaps some day I'll remember. Living without your memory means someone else has to tell me the past. That's a problem. My place in the world is taken by others. There's no room for two. It makes me sad. (Picks up the gun which he'd thrown away) There'll be more possibilities on my own. After everything it was always going to be true. It's impossible to stay with someone else. When love smells like death on every sheet of this damp city. Love. What's love if it isn't the sum of all wartime's casual meetings? (He points the gun at her. Suddenly he wants her to wake up. But deep down he knows it's late. He cries.) Give me a reason not to. Give me one good reason why I shouldn't do it. One. Just one. One good reason why I shouldn't pull the trigger. One good reason. One. Just one, for fuck's sake! One! Please, give me a good reason so that the evil can be snuffed out of this world. Just one good reason. I'm begging you. On my knees. One good reason. Please. One. Just one. Only one. I'm imploring you. I'm urging you. Just one. Please. Please. Please!

Silence. A shot in the darkness.

17 THE JUDGEMENT. OR THE CARRION RUNNING OUT

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN together with *WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT* who lies dead on the floor. Poor thing, God failed to prove her innocence. Sometimes games don't lead you through the right door. Still less in a time of rain. *PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN* holds the gun, pointing it at himself. Now it's his turn. *INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH* carries on watching from a distance. With indifference?

PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN

God judges and pardons neither the judge nor the plaintiff. This isn't over. There's still bullets left. Some. The necessary. Enough to put off the final judgement. The apocalypse. I woke up this morning and I couldn't cope with myself. Sometimes I got tired and couldn't get my head together. (*Looks at INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH.*) She's here to caress me with her gaze and give me strength. It's enough. I'm scared of getting lost tomorrow. They say it's going to be important. Everyone's talking about it. I'd rather stay home. I'm scared of going out. Like her. (*Pause. He takes the most important decision of his life. Or, in point of fact, his death.*) All this started when my wife told me not to look at other women in the street. (*Squeezes the trigger with the gun to his head. Nothing.*) So I started looking at men. Shyly, at first. Later not. My wife didn't notice. And I looked. Looked without guilt. (*Squeezes the trigger. Nothing.*) Almost without realising I started to enjoy it. Sometimes some of the men returned my look. More than I'd ever have imagined. There was fire in their eyes. (*Squeezes the trigger. Nothing.*) One day I went to one of their bars. One of the special ones. A kid approached me. I smiled at him. He smiled back. And then he grabbed my arse. (*Squeezes the trigger. Nothing.*) We spent the night together. The next day I couldn't remember a thing. He had to tell me. I felt disgusted. Nausea overwhelmed me. I vomited and went out into the street. (*Squeezes the trigger. Nothing.*) From that day on I stopped looking at men. And started with dolls. Not women, which is a sin, but dolls. Without guilt. Without breaking the rule. But the competition's fierce these days. Everyone's looking for a place to survive. (*The light starts to gradually fade until the end of the scene.*) We're animals searching for an empty burrow. We don't build them. We occupy. This empty house when I arrived here. It belonged to a family that doesn't exist anymore. They all drowned. They're all in some corner of this house. I don't go out. I don't want to die. (*Referring to INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH*) She doesn't go out either. She's the love of my life. She's mine. My girl. (*He looks at her. He wants her to say something... but she doesn't. He starts to weep, inconsolably.*) Give me a reason not to. Give me one good reason why I shouldn't do it. One. Just one. One good reason why I shouldn't pull the trigger. One good reason. One. Just one, for fuck's sake! One! Please, give me a good

reason so that the evil can be snuffed out of this world. Just one good reason. I'm begging you. On my knees. One good reason. Please. One. Just one. Only one. I'm imploring you. I'm urging you. Just one. Please. Please. Please!

Silence. A shot in the darkness.

18 INNOCENT SUPPOSITIONS BEFORE DEPARTURE

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS is still wrapped up in the sheets which have gone back to being white. She kneels like a virgin on the bed. The floor is drenched. As though it's been raining inside. As though she was in the middle of the street. But she's not. She knows the water comes from the somewhere else. She knows it's Christ melting. That the crucifix made of ice is already water mixed with water far less holy. Her tears. She's still. She carries on crying.

YOUNG WOMAN BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Let's suppose that I succeed in escaping. That no-one kills me in this room. That I get out alive. And happy. And let's suppose that on the step, someone comes along, a stranger, someone I don't know, and he asks me something. Anything. Something I don't hear clearly. And let's suppose he seizes hold of me. And I look at him. And see his face covered with a black sock. And let's suppose he pushes me towards some corner. Or threatens me with a weapon. That he throws me onto the flooded floor. That I can scarcely breathe. And let's suppose that no-one intercedes. No one sees anything. And let's suppose that the man says there has to be justice. That the universe isn't going to change for the sake of one more death. Nor with one soul less. That he forces me to take off my clothes. And that I look around me. And I see people. And that I seem invisible half-naked drowning on the pavement. Helpless. And I'm gasping for air. And that I start to give up. And let's suppose that I have to find a reason to tell him not to do it. And I don't know what to say. And that I start to pray. As though it was the only thing I'd learnt in my life. A let's suppose that he opens my legs, violently. And he starts to moan over me. Over my body. And that he forces me down. And that I can hardly keep my head out of the water. And that it hurts. And I shout. And no-one listens. And that all this lasts forever. And let's suppose that he wounds my soul when, in his final spasm, he destroys my pelvis. And let's suppose that he stops. And let's suppose that I want to forget. And that I'm wet. But I can't. And he tidies himself up. Looks at me. Thanks me. And hits me. And let's suppose I end up dead on the floor. Let's suppose. Just suppose. If all this came true, would you give a damn?

19 ONE BOTTLE AWAY FROM THE INAUGURATION

The shots start to multiply like drops of rain on the ground. INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH feels them. She's in the room with the thick walls. Thrown down amongst the boxes of condoms which no-one's coming back to use. PROFOUNDLY SAD MAN and WOMAN WEARING NOT A LOT dead on the floor. Each with a hole in the head. She looks at them. She's not jealous anymore.

INFLATABLE DOLL WITH AN ENORMOUS MOUTH

It's been a while since I started to hear the shots. I loved them. And I liked the fact I liked them. It's good. It's purifying. The shots sound like a party. I started hearing shots shortly after I lost my innocence. Which wasn't my virginity, but something much more terrible. Something which removed the veil from my soul, not just my body. Something which provoked an emptiness which only death can fill. Like now. I haven't been out for one thousand six hundred days. It rains a lot. I'm good here, inside. We're good. Together. Him inside me. Like a couple. Together. Inseparable. I'd die if he wasn't here. And he wouldn't know what to do without me. He's so stupid. His touch is smooth. He knows what he's doing. I don't think it's his first time. When I think about it, it makes me a bit jealous, so I'll talk about something else. We met at a dance. He didn't move with any fluency. I had to teach him some steps. That night we slept together. The next day he didn't seem to remember anything. He's so stupid. When he saw me lying next to him, he got nervous. Like me now. Looking down at him. Silent. Like me. It was then that I stopped talking. And started to feel. To feel the skin of others on mine. And shots in my head. Better times are just around the corner. I know it.

20 THE ANNOUNCEMENT

WANDERING GIRL and FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS together. They prepare the grand announcement. They will be joint hosts of the show. Two good people. With no stains on their souls. They dream fearlessly. With genuine hopes of salvation.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

When I make the announcement I'd like you to be by my side.

WANDERING GIRL

Are they shots?

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

Someone celebrating the big day. Just that.

WANDERING GIRL

I want to be the first. I want everyone to see me. Even if everyone who sees me is dead. Even if they see me with dead people's eyes.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

And they will see you.

WANDERING GIRL

And I want the lights on me. And to be filmed in close up as I climb the staircase.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

Let's go over it all again. You're going to take the bottle in both hands. And when you break it against the keel, you're going to pretend to cry. Like a saint.

WANDERING GIRL

And that's when we say the names.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

And everyone passes in front of us.

WANDERING GIRL

And I'll look at them with hope in my eyes.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

And when I embrace you, and smell your scent, and you mine, we'll ascend and we'll shut the door. And others will remain outside. Different to us. Killing one another in the chaos. In times of war.

WANDERING GIRL

And I'll look at them with pity.

FAT MAN IN A BATH WITH DUCKS

(Getting ready to uncork a bottle which has been lurking, lost, in some corner.)

Now will you give me a kiss?

EPILOGUE

A cork flies through the air. Gentle blackout. The giant screen flickers into life. The seventies style documentary reappears. PIOTR and PAVEL and IVAN, three old men speaking Russian. Everything they say is subtitled. All the actors watch the film. Including the dead ones. On foot in front of the screen. Watching as though what they're going to hear comes as a genuine surprise.

PIOTR

And the next day, with everyone expecting the end of the world, it stopped raining. Just stopped. And the sun came out. So everyone started to remember. And they felt ashamed because of what they'd seen. And they repented. Or at least that was the official version. The transmission made to the whole wide world on the open channel. It was the program with the highest ratings in recent history. It beat all previous audience records. Nothing less. It was about our salvation.

PAVEL

I can remember it well, because of how long the adverts lasted. As the night went on they became longer and longer. Everyone was happy because they weren't dead. And because they could now buy the latest model washing machine which would dry the clothes in the sun again. The rest of the advertising was for sun block, sun hats and even swimsuits decorated with little pictures of empty arcs.

IVAN

Obviously not everyone was happy. Primarily us. We'd worked hard. And nobody appreciated it. After all that we didn't save anyone. Just stopped. Nothing heroic about it.

PAVEL

There weren't any reasons. It just stopped raining. Didn't even see a rainbow. *(Pause)* You know, I sort of miss the rain.

PIOTR

Then the dry season started. They were difficult times... But that's another story. *(He smiles cordially, unworried.)* When you've got time for another program we'll tell you about it. *(The interviewer also appears to smile)* What do you reckon?

PIOTR stays smiling for another moment or two in front of the camera. Silence. The journalist doesn't ask anything else.

*Gradual blackout.
Total darkness.*

Montevideo, February, 2008